



The History of 1st Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery

**From 5 September 1939
to 31 July 1945**

World War II



Editor's Note

This is the Unit War History of the 1st Anti-tank Regiment, Royal Canadian, Artillery. At the end of the war, all units in the Canadian Army Overseas were directed to prepare a summary history for the Directorate of History before they returned to Canada. The histories were written for a military audience, in the “staff duties” format of the time. Some units later wrote a commemorative history for the members of the unit, but there is no evidence that 1st Anti-tank did so. The original of this document is in the Canadian War Museum, and has faded with time.

The history was scanned into a computer and edited to remove the military formatting (such as all names and places in capital letters), the date format standardized, and abbreviations eliminated or defined for a modern audience. Where necessary some explanatory text has been added [in square brackets]. Apart from that, and some minor punctuation, this is their story, in their words.

Appendix F is a collage of photographs, collected by Mike Calnan, that portray equipment and people associated with 1st Anti-tank regiment, although the individual photos may be from other units. This appendix does not exist in the original.

Mike Calnan
Doug Knight
November 2004



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Mobilisation and Training in Canada (5 September 1939 to 22 December 1939)

On 5 September 1939, Lieutenant-Colonel (Lt-Col) G.W.F. Johnston was designated as the Commanding Officer, 1st Canadian Army Field Brigade, which was composed of the following batteries:

27th Field Battery, Montreal, commanded by Major R. E. Bliss (succeeded before departure of the battery overseas by Major J. A. Gillies)

51st Field Battery, Ottawa, commanded by Major G. O. Hutchison

57th Field Battery, Quebec, commanded by Major L. A. Devine

90th Field Battery, Fredericton, commanded by Major T. C. Barker (succeeded before departure of the battery overseas by Major J.L.W. Harris)

The batteries remained in their respective towns until departure for the port of embarkation. On 25 October 1939, the 1st Canadian Army Field Brigade was converted to the 1st Anti-tank Regiment, Canadian Army Active Service Force, by General Order No. 135/39, with effect from 1 October 1939, and Regimental Headquarters (RHQ) received orders to become organized and ready to function as an RHQ in Ottawa by 16 November 1939. It was composed of the following officers:

Lieutenant-Colonel	G.W.F. Johnston	Commanding Officer (CO)
Major	R. E. Bliss	Second-in-Command (2ic)
Captain	G. T. White	Adjutant
Lieutenant	H. Z. Palmer	Intelligence Officer (IO)
Captain	H. E. Slater	Regimental Quartermaster (RQM)
Lieutenant	J. E. Andrew	Regimental Medical Officer (RMO)
Honourary Captain	J. G. Jones	Padre
Lieutenant	G. C. Savage	Paymaster

On 2 December 1939, a warning order was received for the movement of the advance party to England and embarkation leave commenced for the main party. The first Regimental Part 1 Order was issued on 4 December, calling for the first CO's parade at 0945 hours, 5 December 1939, in front of the Coliseum at Lansdowne Park, Ottawa. On 8 December, the regimental advance party consisting of Lieutenant Palmer and Lance/Sergeant (L/Sergeant) R. A. Dow left from the Isabella street siding, near the Elgin Street subway on the first troop train to leave Ottawa for England. [Each unit could promote a percentage of their bombardiers to Lance/Sergeant. He became a member of the Sergeant's Mess and had the authority and privileges of a sergeant, but was paid as a bombardier. This was a unit appointment only – if the man was transferred out of the unit, he reverted to his bombardier rank. A bombardier was the equivalent of a corporal in other corps. A similar system applied to Lance/Bombardiers.] They were attached to No. 1 Provost Company for the journey. On the same train were the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 1st Canadian Infantry Division and his staff.



On 12 December, the final movement order for the regiment was received, and after the last parade had been held at 2200 hours, at which Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) A. B. Brewer was presented with the Canadian Efficiency Medal by Lt-Col Johnston, RHQ and the 51st Battery entrained. There was a large gathering of Ottawa citizens at the station and they gave them a great send-off. Despite the crowd, the train managed to move off on time for Halifax.

At 1300 hours on 18 December, the regiment began to embark on transports as follows:

RHQ & 51st Battery on Royal Mail Steamship (RMS) *Almanzora*

27th Battery on RMS *Oroma*

57th and 90th Batteries on RMS *Rena del Pacifico*

The 27th Battery was quartered in the immigration sheds while awaiting the arrival of their ship. After embarking, the troops were confined to their ships for a period of approximately eleven days before sailing.

At 1130 hours on 22 December, the convoy moved off from Halifax on its journey to England. It was escorted by HMS *Revenge*, the French battle cruiser *Dunquerque*, the light cruiser *LaGloire*, and several destroyers. Christmas 1939 was spent on the high seas, the only comment in the War Diary for that day being that the weather was not good. On 28 December, the convoy was met by an escort of twelve Royal Navy destroyers. A submarine alarm, lasting six hours, was sounded at 1100 hours on 29 December, but fortunately nothing came of it and at 2030 hours the same night, land was sighted and the troops had their first long-awaited look at the shores of "Old England".

At 0930 hours, 30 December 1939, the convoy passed through the Firth of Clyde and anchored off Greenock, Scotland, where the ships were visited by Maj-Gen A.G.L. McNaughton and his staff. Later in the day the regiment disembarked and entrained at the docks on the London North-Eastern railway and proceeded south via Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Newcastle to North Camp Station, Farnborough, Hampshire, arriving at 1100 hours 31 December. RHQ and the 51st Battery marched from the station to Lille Barracks where they joined the 27th Battery who had arrived the day before. The 57th and 90th Batteries arrived the following day. The total strength of the regiment was now 21 officers and 562 other ranks. The 3rd Field Regiment, RCA, was also billeted in Lille Barracks and the two regiments shared officer's and sergeant's messes.



Training in England (30 December 1939 to 30 June 1943)

During the first week in January 1940, one-third of the regimental strength at a time proceeded on their five days landing leave. The 7th Battery had the honour of mounting the first Regimental Guard in England at 0900 hours on 8 January. The first regimental parade was held on 12 January. During the parade several gunners collapsed as a result of an epidemic of influenza, which was prevalent in the area at the time. On 24 January, the regiment and other units of the 1st Canadian Infantry Division were inspected by His Majesty, the King, accompanied by Major-General McNaughton and the Honourable Vincent Massey. The regiment was drawn up in review order on the left of the 3rd Field Regiment, RCA. The highlight of the inspection was when the CO, Lt-Col Johnston, was introduced by Major-General McNaughton to the King as “The man who has not yet seen his guns”.

The regiment now began a period of training and various officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were sent on courses. During this period, the regiment received considerable assistance from the 50th Anti-tank Training Regiment, Royal Artillery, who loaned instructors and equipment and arranged Tactical Exercises Without Troops (TEWTs) for officers and NCOs. [TEWTs were training exercises carried out to teach tactics to officers. Since the object was to train the officers, troops were not involved, although the immediate support staff for the officer (driver, signaller, etc.) might take part.] The regiment did not begin to receive equipment until February, and even then it came in very slowly. Training proceeded satisfactorily and on 8 March, the 90th Battery put on a demonstration of gun drill for a large group of cadets from the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

On 21 March, the regiment paraded in steel helmets for the first time when they received an extensive “spot” inspection by the Commander Royal Artillery (CRA) and his staff. [The CRA was the senior artillery officer in the division, normally a brigadier.] This was followed by similar inspection by the GOC 1st Canadian Infantry Division on 28 March.

The first change in officer personnel within the regiment since its arrival in England occurred on 15 April when Lieutenant G. C. Savage was promoted to the rank of Captain and transferred to the 1st Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery (RCHA). Shortly after this, the regiment, together with the 3rd Field Regiment, RCA, put on a successful training demonstration for Her Royal Highness, Princess Alice, and the Earl of Athlone. On 9 May the regiment carried out its first practice 2-pounder shoot at Stoney Castle Ranges, firing at stationary targets at a range of 400 yards (365 metres) and at crossing targets at a range of 700 yards (640 metres). During the month of May, one troop from the regiment “stood-to” daily at dusk and dawn, fully-armed and equipped in a local anti-parachutist role.

The officers held their first formal mess dinner on 16 May, Major Devine presiding as President. On 19 May the regiment proceeded to Fargo Camp, Salisbury, where the batteries carried out tactical schemes using their complement of twelve 2-pounder guns. While carrying out this training, the regiment received the code word “Caesar”, which meant that it would



provide anti-aircraft defence along either of two routes to be used by the remainder of the Division in the event of the invasion of England.

Before this could be put into effect, the plan was changed and Southern Command ordered that two batteries and RHQ, equipped as per war establishment [the document that listed the unit organization and its entitlement for personnel, weapons, and vehicles], would be prepared to entrain for an unknown destination by 2230 hours 23 May 1940. The batteries chosen were the 27th and 57th. Preparations were carried out immediately and the personnel train left from Amesbury in good time. The equipment train was delayed some time by the non-arrival of supplies and eventually left without them. The supplies arrived shortly afterwards, however, and were sent on to Dover by road.

Embarkation at Dover commenced at 0700 hours 24 May in the following manner:

27th Battery less "C" troop on SS *Canterbury*

57th Battery less "I" troop on SS *Auto Carrier*

RHQ plus "C" and "I" troops on SS *Monas Queen*

The strength of the two batteries and RHQ was as follows:

	Officers	Other Ranks (ORs)	Total All Ranks
RHQ	9	43	51
"H" Section Signals		23	23
27 th Battery	4	117	121
57 th Battery	4	117	122
Total	17	301	318

At 1845 hours 24 May, the CO returned from a conference with information that the sailing had been cancelled, and disembarkation started at once. The regiment returned to Fargo Camp arriving there in the early hours of 26 May.

Shortly after the return to Fargo Camp, another warning order was received for the same movement, but this time three batteries were called for rather than two. This order was cancelled by 1200 hours 26 May, and the unloading of equipment from the train was carried out. The next move for the regiment came on 29 May when the batteries reported to their respective infantry brigades as follows [one battery was normally semi-permanently assigned to each of the brigades in the division, with the fourth battery in reserve]:

27th Battery to 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade (CIB)

51st Battery to 1st CIB



57th Battery to 3rd CIB

By 1 June 1940, the regiment had arrived in the new Divisional Operational Area, near Northampton, and the CO reported to the headquarters of the Canadian Forces Reserve Group. The following day, the CO congratulated the regiment on the very efficient and workmanlike manner in which they had carried out the four moves, involving heavy baggage and equipment, between 22 May and 3 June.

By 7 June, the regiment was again back in the Aldershot Command and was inspected by the King and Queen on 8 June, after which preparations were made for part of the regiment to leave for France. On 10 June, the party left Aldershot under the command of the 2ic, Major Bliss, and travelled by road to Falmouth. The party consisted of seven officers, 289 other ranks (ORs), 130 vehicles, and 8 motorcycles. They embarked, landed in France and were back in England by 18 June, having spent approximately 48 hours in France, four days prior to the armistice between France and Germany.

The regiment then moved to yet another area, Holton Park, Oxfordshire, where several “packing” exercises were carried out until the end of the month, when the regiment moved once more, this time into Work Park, Surrey on 30 June. While in this area, ten percent of the regimental strength was allowed away on privilege leave. Four officers and twelve NCOs from the 2nd Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, were attached to the regiment for training during this time. A fatal accident occurred on 8 July when a 57th Battery dispatch rider, Gunner E. M. Stevens was killed. He was buried in Brookwood Cemetery on 10 July 1940.

As well as carrying out practice night convoys and taking part in a divisional exercise in Ashdown Forest, the regiment acted in an anti-parachutist role. This necessitated a considerable amount of reconnaissance of the area, in order that officers and men might familiarise themselves with the district.

On 4 September, at approximately 2035 hours, a general alarm was given for the whole division to “Stand To”. This lasted several hours, but the anticipated invasion of England by the German army did not materialize. For their conduct during the stand-to, the regiment received a letter of appreciation from the GOC, 1st Canadian Infantry Division.

On 15 September, another fatal accident occurred, when another dispatch rider, Gunner T. Ryan, 51st Battery, was killed. He was buried in Brookwood Cemetery on 18 September 1940. Toward the end of September, the regiment moved into excellent winter quarters in the area of Shirley, Croydon, where batteries were together for the first time since May 1940. RHQ was located at Windmill House, Shirley Park.

At this time the Battle of Britain was at its height, and day and night raids became very frequent. One German bomber pilot was apprehended by the 90th Battery after parachuting into their lines. On 19 September, several civilians were killed and others injured by a land mine which dropped about 150 yards (137 metres) west of a pub in which the officers of the regiment had just concluded a mess meeting. Three of the officers were slightly wounded and were attended by the regimental medical officer. Personnel from the regiment assisted in the search for bodies and the evacuation of injured civilians. Later an unexploded land mine was found which,



to be neutralized, had to be rolled several yards away onto a level platform. Volunteers who carried out this work were Gunner L. Brunet, Gunner J. Geddes, and Gunner K. M. Johnston, all of 51st Battery. The mine was then neutralized by a mine destruction party from the Royal Navy.

On 10 October, the regiment was informed by the Croydon police that Lieutenant J. Keefe had been injured by enemy air action, suffering a compound fracture of the right leg and severe burns to his hand and face. On 21 October, Captain White vacated the appointment of Adjutant to take over duties as Battery Captain in 57th Battery. He was the original adjutant of the regiment and was succeeded by Lieutenant L. P. Frawley.

Toward the end of October, the regiment sent parties of one officer and 24 men for about a week at a time to Tangmere airport to obtain anti-aircraft experience in defending that area. At about the same time, the 57th Battery left the regimental area to take over coastal duties from British troops. On 30 October, Lieutenant T. A. Cowan succeeded Lieutenant Frawley as Adjutant. The GOC, 1st Canadian Infantry Division, Major-General G. R. Pearkes, VC, DSO, MC, visited the regimental area and inspected RHQ, 27th, 51st, and 90th Batteries during their normal training.

On 11 November 1940, Major Bliss was appointed CO of the 2nd Anti-tank Regiment, RCA. Major Devine took over temporary command of the regiment in the absence of the CO and Major J.A.C. Campbell assumed command of 57th Battery.

On 16 November, the regiment supplied a guard under the command of Lieutenant W. G. Reynolds, which was mounted at divisional headquarters. On 24 November, Major D. S. Harkness arrived from the 2nd Antitank Regiment, RCA, and succeeded Major Harris as battery commander of the 90th Battery, Major Harris being posted to the 2nd Anti-tank Regiment, RCA. On 22 December, Lt-Col Johnston left the regiment, which he had organized in Canada and brought overseas, to take command of 1st Medium Regiment, RCA. Major Devine was appointed Acting/CO of the regiment.

During January 1941, the regimental hockey team carried out practices at the Purley ice rink. Several officers were sent on courses to Larkhill, Salisbury during the month. On 7 January, the regiment provided another guard for divisional headquarters, this time under command of Lieutenant E. C. Scott. Twelve 2-pounder guns complete with stores and ammunition were turned over to 2nd Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, on 17 February.

On 3rd March, Lt-Col T. M. Medland arrived from 4th Canadian Field Regiment, RCA, to assume command of the regiment and Major Devine reverted to 2ic.

The battery commanders at this time were:

27 th Battery	Major J. A. Gillies
51 st Battery	Major G. O. Hutchison
57 th Battery	Major J.A.C. Campbell
90 th Battery	Major D. S. Harkness

In March 1941, a system of vehicle holidays was inaugurated to minimize movement of vehicles within the regiment and to effect a saving of petrol and rubber, supplies of which were



becoming quite limited. On 27 March, the regiment was inspected by the Corps Commander Royal Artillery (CCRA), Brigadier J. C. Stewart, accompanied by the CRA, Brigadier Tremaine, and staff.

In April 1941, the 27th Battery moved to new billets in the area of Limpsfield, the 57th Battery moved to Caterham, and the 90th Battery into the area of Tatsfield. Lieutenant E. C. Scott succeeded Lieutenant Cowan as Adjutant on 15 April. The next day, during a heavy air raid over Greater London, 90th Battery suffered severe casualties when a 15-cwt truck received a direct hit from a bomb. Casualties in personnel were as follows:

Killed

G 4023	Sergeant	Olive	H. K.
G 4090	Bombardier	Green	C. W.
G 4172	Gunner	Chase	J. F.
G 4014	Gunner	Clarke	B. M.
G 4059	Gunner	Wheeler	H. R.
G 4141	Gunner	Richard	E. J.
G 4092	Gunner	Warman	R. K.

Wounded

G 4085	Gunner	Critchlow	D.
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The GOC 1st Canadian Infantry Division, Major-General Pearkes, visited the 90th Battery the following day to express his sympathy. The funeral for these men took place at Brookwood Cemetery on 19 April 1941.

During the latter part of April, Observation Posts (OPs) in Ashdown Forest area were manned by officers of each battery in turn in order to give junior officers experience with the duties involved.

On 6 May, Gunner K. P. Matheson managed to get his name mentioned in the War Diary as being returned to the regiment by the Provost [military police] after having been absent without leave (AWOL) for some 308 days. However, nothing daunted, he promptly departed again the next day having managed to persuade his guard Gunner W. G. Smith to accompany him. During May, each Battery in turn fired on the anti-tank ranges at Lydd, and in June the regiment took part in two exercises, “Waterloo” and “Maple”. The divisional artillery sports meet was held on 28 June and was won by the regiment with a score of 22 points. This was followed by the divisional sports meet on 1 July in which the regiment was represented by Sergeant Lawrence, 27th Battery, and L/Sergeant McIntosh, 51st Battery.

On 24 July, Major Devine with 18 ORs left the regiment to take command of the newly formed 7th Anti-tank Regiment, Corps Artillery, and Major G. O. Hutchison was appointed 2ic of the 1st Anti-tank Regiment, RCA. Major Harkness was appointed battery commander of 51st Battery.

From 31 July to 2 August, the regiment took part in exercise “Albert” and on 4 August, all captains and lieutenants were obliged to write an artillery examination, most of which dealt



with field artillery problems. Major G. A. Welsh was posted to the regiment from the 4th Field Regiment, RCA, and took command of the 90th Battery which brought the regiment once more up to its full quota of senior officers as follows:

Lt-Col	T. M. Medland	CO
Major	G. O. Hutchison	2ic
Major	J. A. Gillies	27 th Battery
Major	D. S. Harkness	51 st Battery
Major	J.A.C. Campbell	57 th Battery
Major	G. A. Welsh	90 th Battery

From 13 to 16 August, the regiment acted as enemy troops on exercise “Roft” during which the only outstanding occurrence was an issue of rum, which was given out due to the bad weather during the exercise. On 26 August, the regiment held a garden party for the men, their wives and friends, which was a great success. The band of No. 3 Infantry Holding Unit supplied the musical contributions and added very much to an enjoyable day. During the afternoon Prime Minister W. L. MacKenzie-King inspected the divisional artillery.

On 25 September, the regiment took part in the first long exercise, “Bumper” which ended on 3 October. Two days later they moved to Sennybridge, Wales, where the batteries carried out tactical schemes and range practices until 15 October.

Towards the end of October, Major Hutchison, Captains Scott, and Slater, and Lieutenants Dawes, Cowan, and Prices were all struck off strength the regiment to go to Canada to organize the 5th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, part of 4th Canadian Division. Major Hutchison was to command this new regiment. Major Gillies was appointed 2ic, being succeeded as battery commander of 27th Battery by Captain G. T. White who was promoted to Major.

In November, the 51st Battery took over coastal defences covering an area from west of Selsey Bill to east of Littlehampton. These defences consisted of 6-pounder naval guns on fixed mountings. The 57th Battery moved to the area of Pulborough, 90th Battery to Plumpton, 27th Battery to Henfield, and RHQ moved to Storrington. On 28 November, Lieutenant H. Burnett succeeded Lieutenant Scott as Adjutant.

During December the regimental hockey team managed to get some more practice at the Brighton ice rink. During the same period, each battery went to Lydd ranges for firing practice. On 17 December Lt-Col Medland attended a reception given by the Lord Mayor of London. The regiment’s third Christmas away from Canada was spent in a very enjoyable manner for the Ors, with officers waiting on them at dinner and NCOs taking over their unpleasant duties such as guards.

On 6 January 1942, Gunner C. T. Windsor was killed in a vehicle accident in Pulborough and shortly afterwards, on 11 January, Gunner Cousins died from injuries received when he fell out of a train.

Major D. C. Keating, Royal Artillery, was attached to the regiment on the 17 January as Gunnery Instructor for training purposes. Major Keating arrived at an unpropitious moment as



the regiment was still smarting from the defeat of its hockey team at the hands of the Royal 22nd Regiment. On 27 January, Lt-Col Medland left the regiment to take command of the 2nd Field Regiment, RCA, and was succeeded by Lt-Col H. M. Hague. Just after this changeover in commanding officers, two troops of the 27th Battery took part in a “defence against armour” demonstration in the area of Upper Deeding.

In March, the regiment once again attended Lydd ranges for firing practice. On 1 April word was received that there was a large enemy concentration of paratroops in the area of Cherbourg and a general stand-to was ordered. This lasted from 0200 until 0500 hours, but no paratroopers materialized. Instead the regiment took part in two appropriate exercises, “Robin I and II” which concerned the attack against a bridgehead taken and held by enemy paratroops and airborne troops.

On 10 April, RHQ moved into Woppingthorn House, Steyning, Sussex. Between 21 and 24 April, the regiment took part in exercise “Beaver III” where 1st Canadian Infantry Division was supposed to make a rapid advance from an established bridgehead onto an objective, under invasion conditions. During this exercise, the 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, was under command 1st Anti-tank Regiment for the first but not the last time, and they managed to account for six “enemy” tanks during the last phase of the exercise.

In May 1942, the regiment took part in three exercises: exercise “Mess-Tin” that practiced all ranks in the art of mess-tin cooking, exercise “McGill” that tested the organization and administration of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps (RCAMC). The third and longest, exercise “Tiger”, lasted from 19 May to 31 May and was a large-scale scheme between units of 1st Canadian Corps, known as the “Surrey Army” and 12th British Corps known as the “Kent” army. For the purposes of the exercise, Surrey was treated as a neutral state. This exercise will be mainly remembered for the exceedingly wet and miserable weather that accompanied it.

During June, the regiment put on a series of tactical demonstrations in cooperation with the infantry brigades. The demonstrations consisted of two parts. Part one was a sand-table scheme and part two was the sand-table scheme brought to life, using Bren Carriers [a small, lightly-armoured, fully-tracked vehicle] as tanks and the 2-pounder anti-tank guns with blank cartridges. The demonstration brought out the effectiveness of well-sited guns and of good camouflage, and was attended by officers from the infantry brigades and the divisional artillery. Captain J.G.M. Mooney was admitted to hospital due to injuries received while he was attending an assault course at Borden, Hampshire.

In July 1942, the regiment organized and ran a 2-pounder anti-tank training school at Haywards Heath for the benefit of the infantry anti-tank platoons. It was attended by one officer and 36 ORs of each infantry battalion in the division. This school evidently created quite an amount of interest among the higher officers of the Canadian Army and it is doubtful if any of them failed to inspect or visit it during the time it was functioning. About this time, Major Gillies was struck off strength of the regiment to attend a two-months senior officers course, and was succeeded by Major Harkness as 2ic.



On 8 August, the regiment moved to the Dexhill area, RHQ being established in the Cooden Beach Hotel. The infantry anti-tank school carried out their firing practice at Beachy Head ranges under the supervision of the instructors from the regiment. Quite satisfactory results were obtained.

The regiment received its new 6-pounder anti-tank guns during the month of September. These were taken down to Lydd ranges where the zeroing and firing practice were carried out. On 6 September, Major Gillies returned to the regiment from the senior officers course and resumed his duties as 2ic. Captain W. S. McKnight was promoted to A/Major and was struck off strength to the 2nd Anti-tank Regiment, RCA.

On 21 September, the regiment was inspected by the GOC, Major-General H.L.N. Salmon, and on 17 November took part in the ceremonial parade held by the divisional artillery in Eastbourne.

Lt-Col Hague left the regiment on 23 November to take over command of the 2nd Field Regiment, RCA, and was succeeded by Lt-Col T. Y. Wills from the 4th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, in the 5th Canadian Armoured Division. During October, November, and December, there were several changes among the senior officers in the regiment. Major Campbell was struck off strength on 26 October to the Judge Advocate General Branch, in Canadian Military Headquarters (CMHQ) and was succeeded in command of the 57th Battery by Major M. Y. McLean from the 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA. Major Gillies left the regiment on 2 December to take command of the 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, and was succeeded as 2ic by Major Harkness. Major R. Barker came to the regiment from the 3rd Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, to command the 51st Battery.

Towards the latter part of November and December, the regiment sent several large parties of officers and men to Scotland for combined operations training. The remainder of the regiment carried out anti-aircraft light machine gun (AALMG) practice, using balloons as targets, at Holywell ranges near Eastbourne. On 4 December, the CCRA [Corps Commander, Royal Artillery – the senior artillery officer in the Corps] inspected the vehicles and training of the regiment. The regiment spent its fourth Christmas away from Canada in the usual manner and a good time was had by all.

In January 1943, the regiment fired their monthly practice shoot at Michaeldean ranges, Burling Gap, with moderate results. During this same month, they carried out an experimental form of training by reversing day with night, so that all training and normal daily routine was carried out during the hours of darkness and sleeping was done in the daytime. About the middle of January, Major White and Battery Sergeant-Major (BSM) Zari left the regiment for instructional attachment to the First British Army in North Africa, and while on embarkation leave, BSM Zari was killed in an enemy air raid. Major White was succeeded in command of the 27th Battery by Major G. A. Rankin.

In February a big improvement was shown in the regiment's shoot at Lydd ranges. On 27 February, Lieutenant C. H. Parker and 31 ORs were struck off strength to the 5th Canadian Anti-tank Regiment, RCA.



The previous month's good shooting was upheld when the regiment took part in exercise "Welsh" from 2 to 10 April. During this scheme, they stopped at the Royal Artillery practice camp at Harlech, Wales, where they fired at moving targets at ranges varying from 300 to 800 yards (275 to 730 metres). A total percentage of 65.9 hits was achieved, reputed to be the highest score yet attained by any anti-tank regiment.

In April, the regiment once again undertook the training of the infantry anti-tank platoons of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Brigades. Shortly after the completion of this training the regiment moved to Scotland. RHQ was established in Soorn Castle as was the 27th Battery. The 51st and 57th Batteries went to Catrine while 90th Battery, with their customary facility, set themselves up close to Glasgow and a long way from RHQ and troublesome supervision. While in this area one troop per battery was equipped with 17-pounder anti-tank guns and the 6-pounder troops with Mk IV barrels for the 6-pounder guns [the Mark IV was a longer barrel, improving accuracy and armour penetration]. Firing practice was carried out at Cummertrees ranges. This was the first time that the great majority of the men had ever seen a 17-pounder fired, and as the guns had been accepted without having been proof-fired, the first rounds were fired with a lanyard. Sergeant A. B. Clynick who will be remembered as being the possessor of a large and flowing moustache, made the mistake of peering over the shield as he fired his first round. There was a strong wind blowing and the size of the muzzle flash took Sergeant Clynick completely by surprise. It was some time before he could once again twirl his moustache. From then on the 17-pounder was treated with a good deal of respect. The waterproofing of vehicles was commenced. Major J. H. Sutherland was posted to the regiment about the middle of April to take over command of the 51st Battery upon Major Barker being posted to 2nd Canadian Army Reinforcing Unit (CARU).

On 10 June 1943, Lt-Col G. O. Hutchison returned to the regiment to take over command from Lt-Col Wills, and on 15 June, the regiment took part in two schemes "Stymie I and II" in which they practised the loading and off-loading of vehicles and personnel from ships.

On 24 June, the mechanical transport (MT) ships [ships carrying the unit's vehicles and guns] sailed in convoy at 1150 hours for an unknown destination. These were followed on 28 June by the personnel ships, and so after three and a half years the regiment set sail from England. The men left those shores with mixed feelings. Many pleasant memories were taken with them from this "green and pleasant land." The future promised to be far from dull and it looked as though the years of training in England would be put into practical use at last.

On leaving England the senior officers of the regiment were as follows:

Lt-Col	G. O.	Hutchison	CO
Major	D. S.	Harkness	2ic
Major	G. A.	Rankin	27 th Battery
Major	J. H.	Sutherland	51 st Battery
Major	M. Y.	McLean	57 th Battery
Major	G. A.	Welsh	90 th Battery
Captain	J. J.	Coatsworth	Adjutant
A/Captain	J. M.	Lindsay	RQM



Active Service in Sicily (10 July 1943 to 3 September 1943)

On 1 July 1943, the troops were informed that they were going to make an assault landing on Sicily. However, before arriving, the regiment was to suffer its first casualties of the operation. On 5 July the transport “CC-1”, on which Major Harkness together with some RHQ personnel and the 17-pounder troops from 27th and 57th Batteries were being transported, was torpedoed at 1715 hours between Algiers and Bougie. Major Harkness was awarded the George Medal for his conduct during the torpedoing and subsequent sinking. The casualties were as follows:

Dead & Missing

27th Battery

D 7168	Gunner	Belziel	A. R.
D 7074	Gunner	Stankus	C.
D 7172	Gunner	Morton	R.
D 7017	Gunner	Keogh	L. T.

57th Battery

B 17385	Gunner	Martin	F. B.
F 65567	Gunner	Ashe	F. J.
E 0021	Gunner	Seifert	N. B.
E 0089	L/Sergeant	Bannier	W. A.
E 0086	L/Bombardier	Annett	W. H.
E 0082	Bombardier	Clark	J. W.

Wounded and Admitted to 69 British General Hospital, Bougie

RHQ

G 4099	Bombardier	Fraser	K. W.
C 50017	L/Bombardier	Moore	A. J.
M 173	Gunner	Ward	J. J.

27th Battery

F 77450	Gunner	McDonald	W. W.
E 30647	Gunner	Blais	L. A.
D 7169	L/Bombardier	Hammerbeck	R. A.
D 7069	Gunner	Grenier	A.
F 89630	Gunner	McDonald	A. S.



57th Battery

E 0137	Gunner	Adams	P. H.
C 768	Gunner	Sigouin	J. A.
D 118123	Gunner	Dolbec	M.
B 11286	Gunner	McMahon	J. J.
E 0054	Gunner	Furlong	H. E.

In the early hours on 10 July the regiment began to land on the Pachino Peninsula, and the 90th Battery in support of 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade scored first blood for the regiment when one of its 6-pounder guns destroyed an Italian mortar post. The regiment as a whole was operating on a light scale of vehicles as not all the MT ships had completed off-loading. The regiment did not receive the balance of its vehicles until 16 July. Little opposition was met on the beaches, and the division proceeded without much difficulty toward its objectives. The first casualty was Sergeant W. J. Upton, 90th Battery, who was wounded and evacuated on 16 July and later died of wounds.

When the division was still some distance south of Leonforte, the 90th Battery suffered some casualties from enemy shelling and L/Bombardier D. Bemrose displayed great coolness and courage under shell-fire in assisting these wounded to the ambulance. Though wounded himself, he then drove the ambulance back to the first aid post.

Leonforte

Stiff opposition was met by the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade as they neared Leonforte. The 90th Battery did some very good work in support of the infantry, both in the assault on the town and in the subsequent house clearing. On 25 July the Battery Commander, Major Welsh and Lieutenant C. E. Murdoch had occasion to observe an enemy machine-gun post, which was holding up our infantry on the only avenue of approach into the town. Major Welsh then ordered up two 6-pounder guns under command of Sergeant Swift and Sergeant Morehouse, which were put into position and engaged the machine gun post at 900 yards (820 metres), destroying it together with a light tank. Major Welsh and Lieutenant Murdoch then went forward to observe the results of the shooting and returned with about 20 prisoners whom they had managed to collect.

On 26 July "L" troop under command of Lieutenant G. C. Evans formed part of a flying column together with four tanks and one company of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) that was sent into Leonforte to assist the Loyal Edmonton Regiment in clearing the town. Lieutenant Murdoch with his troop of 17-pounder guns followed closely behind in support. Lieutenant Evans deployed his guns in the town and enemy-held houses were effectively engaged in spite of heavy mortar and small arms fire. The troop did a very good job assisting in the eventual clearing of the town. During that night Lieutenant C. H. Waterous and his despatch rider, Gunner J. G. Clarke, 90th Battery, were killed while out on a reconnaissance when they got too far ahead and were shot up by an enemy tank which they came upon unexpectedly.



RHQ was strafed by enemy aircraft on 28 July, and Gunner W. L. Dunn, 90th Battery, was seriously wounded. Jaundice, malaria and dysentery were also causing casualties throughout the division. The next day RHQ moved into an area five miles south of Agira. The 57th Battery in support of 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade was deployed in the area of Catanova and had one man wounded during the day.

The first copy of the divisional newspaper “The Red Patch” was received by the regiment on the 30 July. During this time the division was moving steadily ahead over difficult ground and very dusty roads in extremely hot weather. By 4 August, they were in the area of Regalbuto and on 5 August, the 27th Battery was in action near Carcoci where Gunner Bedford was killed, Gunner G. D. Brown captured, and L/Sergeant N. F. Smith wounded. By 6 August, the 1st Canadian Infantry Division passed into army reserve, and on 12 August, the regiment was concentrated in an area south of Scordia where a certain amount of training and sports was carried out.

The weather was very hot and training was carried out only in the cooler part of the day. The Sicilian custom of having a siesta was quickly adopted and from then on everyone spent the afternoons lying in whatever shade could be found, trying to keep cool and fighting a losing battle against the flies. On 14 August, the following officers were awarded decorations for the action at Leonforte:

Major	G. A.	Welsh	DSO
Lieutenant	E.St.J.C	Murdoch	MC
Lieutenant	G. C.	Evans	MC

While in Scordia, the regiment was addressed by General Montgomery, the Eighth Army Commander, who visited them on 20 August. Two days later, Lieutenant-General McNaughton inspected the regimental area and general layout of the camp. The 90th Battery provided the guard of honour and this, the General inspected to the whirring of newsreel cameras. In spite of the heat, all infantry anti-tank platoons underwent a short period of training, which included a scheme [training exercise] under the supervision of their respective batteries.

The highlight of the rest period in Scordia was the regimental officer’s party, which Lt-Col Hutchison organized. This was the first large-scale dinner that any regiment gave after leaving England, and it proved to be the forerunner of many similar ones throughout the division. The plans were laid with as much care as for a major operation, and the future army careers of the officers in charge of the arrangements were at stake. Captain H. Burnett was entrusted with the task of procuring a pig, with the aid of a pair of “condemned” boots, a working knowledge of French and the realization of what failure would mean he was successful. He was not successful, however, until he had helped pursue a promising specimen through the only known swamp in Sicily. Lieutenant L. A. Smith, after scouring most of Sicily for glasses, finally found a sufficient quantity in the house 100 yards (90 metres) from where RHQ was encamped. An orchestra was brought from Lentini. Apart from an incurable habit of playing God Save The King in waltz time to the confusion of the guests who found themselves applauding the national anthem, those men did very well. Of course, they did suffer from the Sicilian fault of no two people being able to agree on anything but the fact that one would be giving forth with “O Solo Mio” while the rest



were “sending” with Ciribiribin was attributed to the impact of jazz on the Sicilian temperament. The dinner itself was a masterpiece with the pig borne in in triumph, whole, on a large platter with an apple in its mouth. The number of cocktails served before dinner would have been sufficient to make even bully beef look good, and even after dinner the supply of alcohol never did run out. Among the guests at this party were Brigadier A. D. Matthews, Lt-Cols J. S. Ross, H. N. Lane, K. Lockatt, D. Farquharson, W. Bradford, and the Brigade Major, Royal Artillery, Major D. Doherty. Although the party had taken a great deal of work to arrange, it was well worth it.

In addition to this party several entertainments were staged. On one evening there was an “amateur night” while on another evening an Italian variety show visited the area. On 1 September, RHQ received the preliminary warning order for the forthcoming invasion of Italy and on 2 September, 90th Battery moved to a concentration area south of Messina. The balance of the regiment followed on 4 September. Embarkation commenced the same day.



Italy (5 September 1943 to 15 March 1945)

The regiment landed in Italy on 5 September and moved into a concentration area south of Reggio di Calabria. Italian soldiers were giving themselves up in hundreds and opposition to the advance of the division was very light. On 8 September, Italy surrendered to the Allies. On 13 September, Major Welsh, Lieutenant Murdock, Lieutenant Evans, Sergeant J. Towe and Bombardier R. A. Bennett were decorated by General Montgomery when he presented awards for valour to personnel of the 1st Canadian Infantry Division for the campaign in Sicily. At this time the regiment was in an area south of Catanzaro where general maintenance was carried out. The division commenced to move forward once again on 17 September. Batteries moved with their respective brigades and were deployed to the north of Potenza, and then moved on north from there. These moves were daily occurrences.

RHQ and 27th Battery arrived in the area of Minervino where the 27th Battery was placed under command of a special divisional advance guard, which was formed to clear the way for the further advance of the division against the left flank of the German Army containing the British and American armies at Salerno. However, by 3 October, the 27th Battery had returned to regimental command. Major G. T. White rejoined the 27th Battery at this time after an absence of eight months. Major Rankin was posted to Headquarters 13th British Corps. At this time the condition of the roads, due to heavy rains caused the advance to be slowed down considerably.

By 14 October, the division had advanced to just south of Campobasso by a series of short actions in which some of the batteries, the 57th and 90th in particular, engaged the occasional machine gun post or enemy-held house in support of the infantry. The enemy's resistance had gradually become stiffer, and shelling and mortaring had increased in proportion.

Campobasso

On 14 October 1943, Major White picked up a British agent, Lt-Col Whyte, 3rd Field Regiment, Transvaal Horse Artillery, and two escaped British prisoners of war. He took them to HQ 1st Canadian Infantry Division where they gave information regarding enemy gun locations on the immediate front.

They also stated that they had seen no tanks in the Campobasso - Castropignano area. This information was thought to be fairly accurate as these men had been behind the enemy lines for about six days. Towards the end of October, Campobasso was occupied and the division was deployed in static positions in the Campobasso - Vinciatiuro area. The 27th, 51st, and 57th Batteries were deployed with their respective brigades, most of them managing to secure billets. They remained in this area until moving into a concentration area near Petrella on 19 November.



On 2 November 1943, a new war establishment was received by the regiment, which allowed an increase of one captain per battery, whereupon the following promotions were effected:

Lieutenant R.J.K. Pyne to A/Captain	27 th B attery
Lieutenant C. E. Murdoch, MC, to A/Captain	90 th Battery
Lieutenant J. E. Ferguson to A/Captain	Adjutant
Lieutenant J.A.C. Kee to A/Captain	RQM

At the same time Captain J. J. Coatsworth was posted to the 51st Battery and Captain J. M. Lindsay was posted to the 57th Battery. On 13 November, Captain Pyne left for England and Lieutenant J. S. Mulkerns was promoted to A/Captain in his place. On 21 November, the regiment was concentrated in the area of Petrella where it remained until 30 November. During this time casualties were heavy due to jaundice and malaria: among these Major J. H. Sutherland and Lieutenant R. A. Ryder were evacuated with jaundice. Captain H. W. Sutherland was promoted to A/Major and took over command of the 51st Battery vice Major J. H. Sutherland.

The 27th Battery with 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade was under command of the 13th British Corps on 16 November for operations on the upper Sangro river. On 30 November, the division moved up to the area of Fossacesia to relieve the 78th British Division. During the move up of RHQ and 57th Battery three men were killed and one man wounded by an "S" mine in an area north of Rocca.

Those killed were:

E 14299	Gunner	Fontaine	A.	57 th Battery
L 10456	Gunner	Frigon	J.	57 th Battery
H 10275	Private	Vincent	H. J.	57 th Battery

Wounded

L 458	Gunner	Sitter	A.	57 th Battery
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Those killed were buried in the British cemetery at Fossacesia.

Moro River

On 5 December 1943, wireless silence was lifted and the division prepared to force a crossing of the Moro River and establish a bridgehead on the far side. The 1st and 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigades were chosen as the troops to make the initial crossing and with these two brigade groups went two batteries from this regiment. In support of 1st Brigade was 51st Battery while 90th Battery fought once more with 2nd CIB. The 57th Battery assisted 90th Battery in their crossing of the river by supplying them with additional men and vehicles and three men of 57th Battery were wounded in this action.

This was the beginning of the battle for Ortona, which not only saw some of the bloodiest fighting of the whole campaign but also was one of the most famous victories of Canadian arms in Italy.



Weather conditions for the river-crossing were far from ideal and due to the softness of the ground and the determined resistance of the enemy, 90th Battery were unable to get any guns across until 2215 hours 9 December. By 10 December all the guns of 90th Battery were across the river together with one troop from 51st Battery. The balance of 51st Battery succeeded in crossing by 11 December. The role of 3rd CIB in this operation was that of divisional reserve and in accordance with this plan 27th Battery did not cross until later. This battery, prior to moving across the Moro, concentrated in San Apollinare.

Even with the entire division across the river, German resistance was far from broken and the enemy made numerous counterattacks. Both infantry and supporting arms suffered heavy casualties but were never in danger of being forced to withdraw. So ended the opening round of the battle for Ortona.

Ortona

On 13 December “A” troop 27th Battery while in support of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, received a direct hit on the gun pit which killed L/Sergeant Chapatis and L/Bombardier C. S. Fairbairn, and on the same day Gunner R. N. Hooper and Gunner D. E. Sleep, 90th Battery, were killed by mortar fire near San Leonardo. During this time and up to 1 January 1944, the men were subjected to heavy shell and mortar fire. The strain was beginning to tell on some of the men and these were sent back to rear echelons for a few days rest. On 20 December the Loyal Edmonton Regiment and the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada of 2nd CIB with “K” and “L” troops of 90th Battery in support, had advanced to the outskirts of Ortona. From then on these two troops were engaged in close support of the infantry during the stubborn street fighting in Ortona. The 6-pounder guns did very valuable work in destroying houses and enemy strong points, even blasting a path through the rubble-choked streets for our tanks. Not only did the 90th Battery use their 6-pounders, but the 17-pounders were also used under the able direction of Captain H. Burnett in such a manner as to gain him the award of the Military Cross.

Christmas day was spent in the line and the celebrations were as good as could be expected. The special Christmas rations were supplemented by freshly killed (by enemy action of course) cattle and fowl, not to mention the odd jug of “vino” left behind by the Germans. The fact that a large mail was received also assisted in making everyone realize that this was not just another day. The CO, Lt-Col Hutchison, made a point of visiting all gun detachments [artillery gun crews are called “detachments”], and battery headquarters throughout the day. On 26 December, Sergeant MA Fallon, 90th Battery, was wounded by machine-gun fire and Gunner Adamson of the same battery was reported missing. His body was later found riddled with bullets upon the occupation of Ortona.

After very stubborn street fighting which continued through Christmas Day to 28 December, the enemy evacuated Ortona. After that the shelling abated somewhat but enemy air activity during daylight hours, both strafing and bombing increased. As a result of one of these raids, Captain Coatsworth, 51st Battery, was killed while travelling in a jeep along the coast road on 28 December. Between 5 and 28 December, the regiment suffered 1 officer and 7 other ranks killed and 12 other ranks wounded. Most of these casualties were in 90th Battery.



Upon the fall of Ortona, the front became more or less static. Both sides engaged in active patrolling and one or two local attacks. The three brigades took up positions along the high ground north of Ortona from the Adriatic coast inland to north of San Apollinaire. The infantry anti-tank guns and three batteries of the regiment were deployed in their respective brigade areas. RHQ was situated between the coast road and the sea about one mile south of the River Moro. They remained under canvas all winter.

During this period of static warfare the men were subjected to more hardship than ever before. The weather was cold and wet with numerous snowstorms and, due to the constant shelling, habitable houses were very scarce. Movement was kept to a minimum, as the enemy possessed several observation posts (OPs) commanding our area.

Batteries were rotated in the line so that each would have a rest period. Within the batteries themselves, two troops were deployed in the forward areas with one troop in depth. The personnel of the troops also changed from the forward gun positions to those of the ones in depth, during their battery's spell in the line. This greatly relieved the strain on the detachments as the forward guns were open to neutralization by hostile patrols. In several cases it was impractical to take the rations up by vehicle, as the roads were under accurate harassing fire from medium machine guns, mortars, and artillery. Carrying up the rations by hand was a slow and tiring job at a time when the batteries were not up to full strength. To overcome this, the 27th Battery had attached to them a detachment of mules complete with Indian muleteers. These lived with one of the troop HQs and commuted between the troops and battery headquarters carrying rations, petrol, and mail. This system worked very well and the mail always got through. They did, however, give the Battery Captain "Q" a few extra headaches, as the supply point was slightly incredulous when he indented for the mule's rations. Early in January 1944, the regiment received some officers and senior NCOs from various Canadian divisions in England who had volunteered for six months' attachment to the 1st Canadian Infantry Division for battle experience. The division sent an equal number of officers and NCOs to England, including A/Major H. W. Sutherland of the 51st Battery. Major J. H. Sutherland returned to the regiment after a bout of jaundice and assumed command of 51st Battery.

On 6 January, the Corps Commander, General H.D.G. Crerar visited RHQ, and later watched a demonstration of manhandling anti-tank guns by 57th Battery. Major Welsh left the 90th Battery on 12 January to return to England on his way to Canada, and was succeeded by Major A. H. Warr who had come out to Italy on exchange from the 2nd Anti-tank Regiment, RCA.

From 14 to 18 January, 11th CIB, 5th Canadian Armoured Division, relieved 3rd CIB in the coastal sector and the 49th Battery, 4th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, in support of them, relieved the 27th Battery who moved into San Apollinare. On 18 January, 2nd CIB relieved 11th CIB, which was unable to gain its objectives in that area. The regiment at this time had five officers, six sergeants and seven other ranks attached for a period of two weeks from the 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, for battle experience.

On 23 January, Lieutenant K. M. Johnson, 57th Battery, removed some high explosive charges from a small bridge while under fire when he was on a reconnaissance of the forward



areas. This action subsequently gained him a Mention-in-Despatches. During January, the regiment received a supply of the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal ribbons and clasps, which were then issued out to all ranks. During this period the regiment ran an antitank training school for infantry anti-tank platoons and reinforcement personnel. Leaves were started to the Eighth Army leave camp at Bari, and 18-hour passes were given to San Vito. A river crossing demonstration was put on by the regiment, bringing out the different methods of getting anti-tank guns across a river. On 9 February Major Harkness left the regiment for England to command the 5th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, 4th Canadian Armoured Division. Captain T. A. Cowan was promoted to the rank of A/Major to command the 57th Battery. Major M. Y. McLean took over command of the 27th Battery. On 11 February, Major G. T. White was appointed 2ic.

During the early part of February, reports had been reaching the regiment from infantry sources that there was a 6-pounder gun approximately 200 yards from the German outposts. Upon investigation this gun proved to be one abandoned by 4th Indian Division following an unsuccessful advance. Lieutenant G. A. Harkness decided that if this gun could be made serviceable it would be an admirable way of silencing a troublesome German strongpoint. Sergeant McAra and Gunner Taylor volunteered to go with Lieutenant Harkness, and for four nights these men worked on the gun and manhandled it into a position from which they could engage the target. Enemy patrols passed close by them on several occasions, but never stopped to investigate what they fondly thought to be a derelict gun. Finally, one dawn, a supporting barrage was laid down by the field artillery and these three men fired eleven rounds at point-blank range. Dust and falling masonry obscured the target from the gun position, but the infantry who investigated later said that at least ten casualties had been inflicted.

In March 1944, Eighth Army commenced its preliminary preparations for the assault on the Gustav and Hitler lines. This entailed the concentration of a large number of divisions south of the Liri valley and the consequent thinning out of the divisions remaining in the line. As a result of this, 1st Canadian Infantry Division that was already covering more than a normal divisional front, became even more extended. To form a second line of defence in the event of a temporary German breakthrough, three localities were chosen by Major-General C. Vokes, DSO, which were to be turned into nodal points with all-round-defence by both infantry weapons and anti-tank guns. The personnel to man these defences came from one anti-tank battery in each nodal point and a Royal Canadian Engineers company that was divided up amongst the three.

These nodal points stretched in a line along the main Ortona - Orsogna road and were at important road junctions. The most easterly was just west of Ortona and was entrusted to the 51st Battery. Next and about two miles inland, at "Dundee Crossroads" was the 27th Battery, while on the western end was 90th Battery at Caldari. The 57th Battery was held in reserve at San Apollinare.

The 113th and 104th Batteries of 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, relieved 27th and 90th Batteries to allow the latter to carry out their new tasks. All the guns in these three strong points were dug into elaborate gun pits reminiscent of the last war. The 27th Battery outdid the others by finding a large cliff with a soft stone face into which they dug a series of caves.



These positions were inspected by the CRA 1st Canadian Infantry Division, the CCRA V Corps, and by Major-General Vokes, and slight modifications to the siting of the guns were made. Apart from a good deal of harassing fire by 105-mm and 150-mm guns, the system was never put to the test of an attack.

During April the regiment received International half-tracked vehicles to tow their 17-pounders and these proved greatly superior to the Field Artillery Tractors (FAT). This superiority was ably demonstrated in various gruelling hill climbing and river crossing tests, the most famous of which was known as Exercise “Quad-buster”.

On 7 April the CO, four battery commanders, four liaison officers, and a number of ORs from 13th Anti-tank Regiment, RA, 10th Indian Division, were attached to the regiment to prepare for the relief of 1st Anti-tank Regiment, RCA. For several weeks vehicles had been heading in all directions at the instigation of the CO. Those wise in the ways of “Col Hutch” knew that something special in the way of parties was being prepared. This proved to be the case, and on 10 April the regimental officers held a mess dinner at the “Sword and Drum”, the officers club in San Vito. Captain Mulkerns, who was in charge of entertainment, produced two imported dancing girls from Bari. These arrived with escorts - what they lacked in dancing ability they obviously made up for in experience in other ways. Gunner Mansfield was persuaded to sing his theme song, “Old Rocking Chair”, and then proceeded to forget how to stop. His rendition threatened to drown out even the sound of Major-General Vokes, the guest of honour, losing at crap in the next room. The party was a great success.

On 15 April, Major D. J. Halfhide was posted to the regiment and took command of the 57th Battery.

Preparation for the Assault on the Hitler Line

On 18 and 19 April, 13th Anti-tank Regiment, RA, 10th Indian Division, relieved the regiment and on 20 April the regiment moved with the 1st Canadian Infantry Division to a concentration area in the vicinity of Campobasso. The regimental area centred on the town of Baranello, southwest of Campobasso. Full security measures were taken to conceal the move and all formation patches and Canada badges were removed from vehicles and uniforms. On arrival in the new area comprehensive training was immediately begun. This consisted in the greater part in battery schemes and troop schemes. Ten days after their arrival in Baranello, the batteries started to leave, at about 5-day intervals, with their respective brigades. En route to Caserta, each brigade stopped at a concentration area near Lucera. Intensive assault training was carried out with infantry and tanks to practice the tactical handling of these two arms in the attack on a strongly held position. The regiment’s role was to practice the quick consolidation of objectives. These schemes were carried out with tanks of the 140th Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps, who were to support the division in the Hitler Line attack. Experiments were also carried out by each battery in using tanks as gun tractors. It was found that the performance of a tank towing a 17-pounder and limber was only slightly superior to that of a half-track.



Captain R. L. Ryder was sent to 4th British Infantry Division as the 1st Division's artillery liaison officer to liaise between the field regiments of this division who were to support the attack of 4th British Division on the Gustav Line.

By 7 May, the whole regiment was in a concentration area near Caserta where they remained approximately a week. While in this area, river crossing schemes were carried out in cooperation with the Royal Canadian Engineers, using Mark IV rafts. The 15th and 111th Batteries of the 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, came under command of the regiment for the forthcoming operation. On 15 May, the 51st and 27th Batteries moved up with the 1st and 3rd Brigades to a concentration area near Mignano in preparation for the assault on the Hitler Line. On the morning of 16 May, 1st CIB supported by 51st Battery took part in the closing phase of the breaking of the Gustav Line.

[What follows is a day-by-day account of the breaching of the Hitler Line.]

17 May – The 2nd and 3rd CIB were moving up and 27th Battery suffered three gunners wounded. The troops of 51st Battery were under heavy mortar fire and sniping and Gunner J. A. Mador was mortally wounded. “B” Troop of 15th Self-propelled (SP) Battery, 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, was under command of 51st Battery. That night, during an enemy counterattack, the infantry anti-tank 6-pounders knocked out two German Mark IV tanks. The divisional area received quite a heavy air attack at approximately 2300 hours.

18 May – The battle for the Hitler Line started as the division moved forward around the west of Cassino and Monte Cairo and fought its way through the outposts of the line. At this time Cassino and Monte Cairo were still in enemy hands and the latter was a commanding height, so to cover the advance a heavy artificial smoke screen was laid down. The infantry were advancing fairly rapidly and 51st Battery deployed three times during the day. The 90th Battery was still moving up with 2nd Brigade, while 27th Battery was supporting 3rd Brigade in the centre.

19 May – The division had moved up to within a few thousand yards of the enemy wire, with division headquarters and RHQ well forward so that they were just out of mortar range and ahead of the leading brigade HQ. The enemy was shelling and mortaring heavily, and it was noticeable that the number of dud rounds was fewer in comparison with the percentage experienced in front of Ortona. Gunner McFadden, 27th Battery, was killed by shell-fire. The SP troop of 7th Anti-tank Regiment, under command 51st Battery, engaged several enemy-held houses and inflicted casualties. Some vehicles of the batteries deployed were temporarily put out of action by mortar and shell fire.

20 May – The 1st and 2nd Brigades were feeling out the defences of the Hitler Line itself and establishing a firm base for the assault. Both 27th and 51st Batteries experienced heavy shelling and mortaring and Lieutenant Clark of the 27th Battery lost his right arm.

21 May – Another enemy air raid was experienced on the night of 20/21 May. During the day 51st Battery had one 17-pounder gun knocked out by mortar fire. At 1400 hours, the Free French Division on the high ground on the left of 1st Canadian Infantry Division reported that approximately 50 enemy tanks were massing in the area of Monte San Leucio. Any counterattack that this force might have been contemplating was stopped when their advance was



broken up by medium artillery and by Kitty Hawk aircraft of the Royal Air Force. These tanks were last seen to be moving northwest under cover of their own smokescreen.

22 May – At 1000 hours an assault was launched on the left by 1st Brigade, led by the 48th Highlanders of Canada. Lieutenant G. P. Thomas, Troop Commander of “E” Troop, 51st Battery, went through the gap in the wire with the 48th Highlanders to recce [make a reconnaissance of] gun positions. On the 48th Highlanders front, enemy defences consisted of mines, wire, concrete machine gun posts, and concrete pill-boxes. There was also a 75-mm gun set in a revolving tank turret. One of these pill-boxes was engaged by a 17-pounder laid by Gunner R. J. Welburn, commanded by Bombardier Cardiff, and under the direction of Lieutenant D. N. Solomon of the 51st Battery. Five rounds were fired at this target at a range of 1,600 yards and, after the third round, an explosion was seen. Upon investigation, it was found that the pill-box had received two direct hits in the turret from the 17-pounder. The crew of five Germans was killed. Previous to being knocked out, this pill-box had accounted for three Sherman tanks. By this time the 48th had established a bridgehead in the Hitler Line southwest of Pontecorvo, and at 1900-hours, “E” Troop of the 51st Battery moved into the bridgehead and deployed. “F” Troop moved forward on the left to give covering fire to the bridgehead. This same day, 3rd Brigade cleared a large wood in which the Germans had established machine gun in the trees. The 3rd Brigade had now secured their starting line, and 2nd Brigade moved through 3rd Brigades’ area to take up positions on the right flank.

23 May – The 2nd Brigade launched their attack north of Pontecorvo with the PPCLI on the right and the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada on the left. The Loyal Edmonton Regiment was in reserve. All brigades during this battle were supported by squadrons of the 140th Regiment, RAC. They met heavy resistance and the same type of defences as already described, stretched across the Liri valley. The concrete pill-boxes took a heavy toll of our tanks and the infantry suffered heavy casualties. While 2nd Brigade was attacking on the right, 3rd Brigade was pushing forward in the centre. During this action “C” Troop of the 27th Battery in support of the Carleton and York Regiment was caught in heavy enemy mortar concentrations and had one officer, Lieutenant C.O.D. Magee, three detachment commanders, and four gunners wounded. As a result the troop became somewhat disorganized until Lieutenant W. A. Grant, the Battery Liaison Officer, took charge and reorganized the troop. Two guns had been knocked out in these same concentrations, and a third was knocked out when it tried to move forward. The fourth gun was deployed. The driver of one of the half-tracks, Gunner H. J. Snow, did very good work in the evacuation of the wounded and subsequently was awarded the Military Medal. “B” Troop of the 27th Battery moved forward through “C” Troop in support of the West Nova Scotia Regiment. Second-Lieutenant J. B. O’Neill of this troop laid the gun himself, which accounted for three enemy machine gun posts.

On the 1st Brigade front, the infantry began to exploit their successes of the previous day, and by 1600 hours enemy transport was reported to be retiring. “F” Troop and the SP Troop under command of the 51st Battery were ordered to engage enemy escape route. This was carried out successfully by the SPs.



The 90th Battery, in support of 2nd Brigade, had one gun knocked out by shell fire and one gun tractor received a direct hit. Four ORs riding in this vehicle were wounded. Major H. Burnett, MC, was commended for the work he did that day in keeping brigade headquarters informed on the progress of the infantry.

24 May – Pontecorvo was occupied and the enemy continued to retire. The 27th Battery had three vehicles damaged by shell fire, three men wounded and one man, Gunner S. V. Martin, killed. As far as the other batteries were concerned, this was a fairly quiet day. The 51st Battery had one troop deployed northwest of Pontecorvo and two troops east of the town.

25 May – The 3rd Brigade passed through Pontecorvo and moved up to the Melfa River where the infantry gained a 200-yard (180-metre) bridgehead on the far bank. The 27th Battery had their 17-pounders deployed on the near side of the river covering this bridgehead. The 1st Brigade went into reserve and remained on the ground that they had taken.

26 May – “B” Troop of the 27th Battery moved across the Melfa River in support of 3rd Brigade. The 51st Battery moved into a concentration area along the banks of the Liri River and the division moved forward as a whole.

27 May – None of the regimental guns saw any action on this day.

28 May – The 111th and 15th SP Batteries returned to the 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, and the 27th Battery went under command of the same regiment. The 104th Battery, 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, was placed under command the 1st Anti-tank Regiment. The 51st Battery passed into reserve, and 57th Battery took over their task of supporting 1st Brigade. The 90th Battery went back into action with 2nd Brigade in the Ceprano area during the relief of the 11th CIB.

1 June – The weather was hot and very dusty and the roads were congested with traffic as the 6th South African Armoured Division, moving up through the 1st Canadian Division, found itself held up by demolitions and mines. The guns of 90th Battery were deployed in the area of Radinico. The 57th Battery deployed south of Ferentino. RHQ and 51st Battery were in the area of Ceccano.

3 June – The 57th Battery was deployed in the area of Anagni and to the north of it when “I” Troop engaged enemy vehicles which could be observed retiring on the road from Acuto, at about 2,000 yards (1,820 metres) range. Due to faulty tracer ammunition, observation was impossible and some of the rounds were believed to have fallen short. This resulted in fire being returned from the 24th Guards Brigade, into whose area some of our rounds had apparently fallen. Fortunately their observation was no better than ours, and their rounds passed harmlessly overhead.

On 4 June, the division passed into reserve on being relieved by the 6th South African Division who were to continue the advance. On 5 June, the 27th Battery returned under command 1st Anti-tank Regiment and the 104th Battery under command of the 7th Anti-tank Regiment.



Piedmonte d'Alife

By 10 June, the regiment had moved back to a concentration area near Piedmonte d'Alife. During the regiment's stay in this area, the weather was extremely hot. In view of this, the daily routine was as follows: training in the morning, siesta from noon until 1500 hours, and the remainder of the afternoon spent on sports and recreation. Leaves to the Eighth Army rest camp at Salerno and to Naples were given on a very generous scale. There were also conducted tours to Rome. This was particularly for the benefit of the Roman Catholics who were very keen to visit the Vatican City and meet the Pope. Each battery undertook the training of the infantry anti-tank platoons of their brigade. On 22 June, the regiment won the divisional artillery sports meet, but when the divisional representatives were chosen, only Sergeant Scharf was picked from this regiment's entries. In the Corps sports meet, he failed to place.

On 5 July, the 17-pounder troop of each battery did a scheme with the infantry of its brigade. These were schemes that practised, once again, the quick consolidation of objectives seized by the infantry.

On 9 July, five officers and 300 ORs went to the 1st Canadian Division Beach Camp for a week. While these men were away, one other scheme took place. This was an exercise to give the newly-formed traffic control units an opportunity to handle convoys and the name of the scheme was "Time Out".

An inter-battery gun drill competition was held on 13 July. This was attended by the CRA who donated a pennant for the winning detachment. After a close fight, "C-3" under Sergeant O. DuMagnee, a 17-pounder from the 27th Battery, won.

It was on 17 July that the regiment, with regret, said good-bye to Lt-Col Hutchison and wished him luck in his new task as CO of the 2nd Field Regiment, RCA. At the same time we welcomed our new CO, Lt-Col E.F. McCordick.

On 20 July, the CRA and his staff made a thorough inspection of personnel, equipment and administration of the regiment. Once again the CRA's pennant was at stake. This was to be awarded to the battery that was deemed to be the best all-round battery on the basis of the inspection. The 27th Battery won the pennant for the second time. All batteries took part in firing practice on the ranges at Eboli before the close of the month. Also during July, the 17-pounder troops of the regiment were reorganized on the new war establishment of three guns per troop instead of four.

Florence (1 to 8 August 1944)

On 26 July, formation flashes and Canada badges were taken down and tactical signs on vehicles were blacked out. The batteries began to move off in turn with their brigades to a concentration area near Spoleto. In this concentration area we were told that the division was moving into action in the area of Florence. The next stop on the road to Florence was a concentration area near Sienna. Physical training, manhandling, and maintenance were carried out and large quantities of Chianti were consumed by RHQ. On 5 August, the 2nd Brigade



commenced the relief of the 2nd New Zealand Division and the 90th Battery were once more in the line. On 6 August, the 1st Brigade, supported by the 51st Battery, took over from the 6th South African Armoured Division and stationed itself along the south bank of the River Arno. Brigade and battery headquarters were situated on the southern outskirts of Florence itself. Both brigades experienced heavy shelling, from 15-centimetre and 17-centimetre guns during the night of 6/7 August. The 57th Battery, at this time, was in reserve in the regimental area near Tabarnuzzo. From then until 8 August, the division carried out a purely static, holding role along the south bank of the River Arno with 1st Brigade on the right, 2nd Brigade on the left and 3rd Brigade in reserve. On 8 August, the division moved to an area near Perugia.

The future plans for the division were as follows:

The Polish Corps was to advance up the Adriatic coast capturing or by-passing Pesaro.

The 1st Canadian Corps would advance on the left of the Polish Corps and would cut in to the coast at Cattolica. These towns were its objectives - Rimini, Ravenna, Ferrara, and ultimately Venice.

The 5th British Corps would be on the left of 1st Canadian Corps and its objective was Bologna.

Between our objectives and us lay the Gothic Line. It was hoped that the battle for the Gothic Line would follow a similar plan to that of the Hitler Line, where after a sharp but comparatively short fight, the enemy retreated swiftly and spectacular advances were made.

Thus it looked to be no further from the Foglia to Venice than it had from the Rapido to Rome. Instead, the advance proved to be slow and costly, and the enemy, taking advantage of the terrain, fought for every yard of ground. For the purposes of the forthcoming action, the batteries were reorganized into two troops each. Each troop had two 6-pounders and two 17-pounder guns. One troop from each battery was put under command of the Royal Canadian Engineers to form working parties.

Captain T. A. Cowan and Captain R. A. Ryder were despatched to flanking divisions as divisional artillery liaison officers.

On 23 August, the regiment commenced its move into action, the batteries forward with their brigades. By midnight of 25 August, the 1st Canadian Division was in action against the outposts of the Gothic Line. The 1st and 2nd Brigades were up [in the lead] and 3rd Brigade was in reserve. Up to 27 August, the fighting was not too severe and 51st Battery with 1st Brigade deployed and advanced several times. On 27 August, 1st Brigade moved forward to occupy the high ground overlooking the River Foglia. The battle for the immediate approaches to the Gothic Line commenced at 1600 hours on 28 August, when 2nd Brigade attacked the town of San Angelo. At 1800 hours 1st Brigade also attacked. During this time the divisional area was being shelled by the guns of the Gothic Line. On the morning of 28th August, Major J. H. Sutherland of the 51st Battery took one prisoner. That afternoon at 1700 hours, when BHQ area was being shelled, Major Sutherland was mortally wounded and died five hours later at 16 MDS. He was buried at Borgo San Maria. The battery also had one sergeant wounded in this shelling. Captain



D. C. Barker assumed command of the battery. The 17-pounders of 90th Battery, while in support of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment, engaged some buildings that were suspected to be enemy OPs.

By 29 August, the division controlled all the high ground on the southern bank of the River Foglia. On the hills on the far-side was the Gothic Line itself. The 3rd CIB passed through the 1st CIB and the latter went into reserve.

A/Major T. A. Cowan assumed command of the 51st Battery on the termination of his task as liaison officer. RHQ moved into the area of Ginestruta. The 2nd CIB with 90th Battery in support crossed the River Foglia on 31 August. The roads were very dusty making all movement visible to the enemy and bringing down shell fire. The 3rd Brigade with 27th Battery did not cross the Foglia until 1 September. It was obvious that the enemy had not completed his fortifications in the Gothic Line as several antitank pill-boxes, similar to those encountered in the Hitler Line, were found on the side of the road, still in their packing cases. The emplacements into which these turrets were to have gone commanded fields of fire that stretched for miles. At 1800 hours on 2 September, 57th Battery came under command of 1st CIB and 51st Battery became regimental reserve. The 90th Battery entered Fano following a successful attack by 2nd Brigade supported by the tanks of 21st Army Tank Brigade. The 90th Battery reached the area of Cattolica when 2nd CIB moved forward on 3 September. The 51st Battery, the regimental reserve, was formed into a battery of three 6-pounder troops. These troops were "B" Troop of the 27th Battery, "E" troop of the 51st Battery and "L" Troop of the 90th Battery. The 111th Battery, 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, came under command 57th Battery, and these two batteries moved into the area of San Giovanni in support of 1st CIB.

RHQ and 51st Battery moved on 4 September to an area just west of Cattolica. The 57th Battery, at this time, was busily engaged with shoots on houses and machine gun posts on the high ground near San Maria, which were holding up the infantry advance. Those shoots were successful and a number of dead Germans were found later. Gunner E. Forget of this battery was killed during this engagement and another man wounded.

In the evening of 4 September at 1930 hours "D" Troop of the 51st Battery, at that time under command of the 57th Battery, gave supporting fire to a local infantry attack. The targets were again houses and machine gun posts and some 70 rounds were fired. Several of the houses were demolished, but many machine guns had not been located and consequently were not neutralized. These remaining machine guns broke up our infantry attack. Captain R. A. Ryder returned from 5th Canadian Armoured Division where he had been acting as division liaison officer, and took over the appointment of Adjutant on 5 September. Captain J.G.M. Mooney replaced Captain Ryder at artillery headquarters at 5th Canadian Armoured Division.

During this period, the Luftwaffe was staging small, nightly air raids on the gun areas of the field and medium artillery. These, while causing no casualties in the regiment, made the nights somewhat uncomfortable. The division was continuing its advance and on 7 September, the 3rd CIB relieved 1st Brigade on the west of Riccione. At the same time 111th Battery ceased to be under command on its return to its own regiment. The batteries of our own regiment were now so organized as to be almost unrecognizable. Troops had been posted from battery to battery



until all that remained in most cases of the original battery was the BHQ. The composition of the Batteries was as follows:

27 th Battery	“I” and “C” Troops
51 st Battery	“B”, “E”, and “L” Troops
57 th Battery	“D” and “G” Troops
90 th Battery	“H” and “K” Troops
“A”, “F”, and “J” Troops were working with the Royal Canadian Engineers	

On 8 September, a new formation came under command of the 1st Canadian Division. This was the 3rd Greek Mountain Brigade, This brigade had no anti-tank guns and 51st Battery was placed under its command to provide its anti-tank defence. On 9 September, this brigade, supported by the 51st Battery, relieved 3rd CIB. This same night also saw the end of the troublesome German air raids as our anti-aircraft (AA) guns were finally given permission to fire. Up until now, these raiders had enjoyed complete freedom from interference from the AA guns as our night fighters were supposed to have been operating in the area. On their arrival this night, however, they were greeted by such a barrage from the heavy and light AA regiments that they never returned.

On the ground, enemy resistance was becoming stiffer and the shelling more intense. The 1st Division was moving forward, but there was savage fighting on the right flank of 3rd CIB. The 27th Battery had two men wounded, and one M-10 [self-propelled anti-tank gun] of the 15th SP Battery was knocked out by enemy Mark VI [Tiger] tanks while in support of this brigade. The balance of the regiment was suffering casualties in guns and vehicles as a result of the increased shelling. The 51st Battery engaged some more houses in the area of Riccione while the 57th Battery deployed in the Hper area north of the River Moriano.

On 15 September, Sergeant McDougall, a detachment commander of “C” Troop, spotted a tank, which was hull-down behind a hedge. Owing to the distance and the small amount of the turret visible he could not be sure of its identity. As there was an officer of the Royal Armoured Corps nearby, Sergeant McDougall showed him the tank and this officer said that it was obviously a German one. Sergeant McDougall gave the order to fire and the 17-pounder misfired. At that moment the tank moved from behind the hedge - a now unmistakable Sherman [the standard allied tank].

On 16 September, the Greek Brigade crossed the River Moriano in the coastal area, and moved up to the south edge of the Rimini airport. This area was very heavily mined and fierce hand to hand fighting took place. The 27th Battery who were also across the Moriano River, in support of 3rd CIB, lost some more vehicles through enemy shellfire. RHQ on the other hand moved into palatial billets in Riccione.

A short pause now occurred while the division re-grouped prior to 2nd Brigade’s attack on the high ground in front of Rimini. The 51st Battery lost Sergeant J.A. Reid who was killed while on a reconnaissance. Gunner Johnston of the 57th Battery also lost his life.

The 2nd Brigade's attack encountered very stiff opposition in the area of San Martino. The 3rd Brigade was also having some very hard fighting at a point known by codeword “Kestrel”



and L/Sergeant Whitticks of the 27th Battery was mortally wounded. In the fighting around “Kestrel”, the infantry, at one time, withdrew behind two of the 27th Battery’s 6-pounder guns. These two guns were commanded by Sergeant Coombes and L/Sergeant Berthiaume. Sergeant Coombes removed the striker from his gun and retired with the infantry, but L/Sergeant Berthiaume, considering his gun to be of vital importance in the anti-tank defence of the area, remained with his detachment in front of our forward defence lines for several hours. For this, L/Sergeant Berthiaume was awarded the Military Medal.

On 19 September, 3rd Brigade, after very stiff fighting, succeeded in capturing San Fortunato Ridge. This ridge dominated Rimini and the guns of 27th Battery were looking down on Rimini airport and the Adriatic coast.

One of the chief tasks of the batteries during this period was to afford close support to their infantry by engaging machine gun posts over open sights.

The advance continued to grind forward and on 21 September, 2nd Brigade attacked across the Marecchia River and established a bridgehead by 1400 hours. Artificial moonlight, created by searchlights, was being used on a large scale and this gave sufficient light, that had the regiment fought a night engagement, flares would not have been necessary.

The regiment had now been in continuous action for one month and the relief of the division, on 22 September, by the 2nd New Zealand Armoured Division took place. The regiment moved to Riccione for its well-earned rest period.

Rest Area in Riccione (23 September to 9 October 1944)

The regiment was concentrated in good billets on the coast road in Riccione. In addition to being able to live in comparative comfort once more, there was a generous leave allotment for personnel and sports were also organized on a regimental basis. The men’s time however, was not entirely spent in recreation as there was much maintenance done and all four batteries were reorganized. No. 1 British Casualty Clearing Station, 83rd British General Hospital, asked for volunteers for blood donations and 200 men from the regiment volunteered. Of these, 46 men were accepted, as having the class of blood required.

Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineering inspectors from Eighth Army carried out a very thorough inspection of all the vehicles in the regiment and their report on the standard of maintenance in the regiment was anything but favourable. Five long-service men left for Canada on 4 October as prisoner-of-war escorts.

San Arcangelo to Cesena (9 – 28 October 1944)

On 9 October, the rest period came to an end when the division moved forward to the relief of 5th Canadian Armoured Division. On 10 October, 51st Battery moved to San Arcangelo with 1st Brigade. On 11 October, RHQ moved into the area of the railway station just south of this town and 51st Battery moved with 1st CIB into Savignano, which was being heavily shelled.



It was now proposed that the regiment should be reduced to three batteries, and that the other batteries would absorb the personnel of 90th Battery, which was to be disbanded. Plans were laid accordingly but they failed to materialize.

At this time only one brigade, 1st Brigade, was committed, and 51st Battery was the only battery of the regiment which was in action, this battery being deployed in a bridgehead established on the northern side of Savignano. Here, Sergeant W. A. Scharf was seriously wounded by shell-fire.

Captain J.A.C. Kee went to the 2nd New Zealand Division as artillery LO on 12 October.

The 1st Brigade was meeting stiff opposition as they moved forward, and the forward troops were heavily shelled on 14 October. Lieutenant G. A. Hobbs, a troop commander of 51st Battery, was wounded in the stomach and chest by mortar fire while riding a motorcycle back from a recce.

Since the battery was operating in close country, the 17-pounder troop was used to give depth to the anti-tank defences and was not committed with the forward battalions. The half-tracks from the 17-pounder troop were used to move forward both the Royal Artillery and infantry 6-pounder guns, as the small arms fire was intense. On 17 October, the regiment drew four 2-pounder guns adapted with a choke-bore “Little John” adapter. This modification jumped up the muzzle velocity to 4,000 feet-per-second (1,218 metres-per-second) when sabot ammunition was used. [The “Little John” attachment squeezed the shot to a smaller diameter on leaving the muzzle of the gun. This resulted in a very high muzzle velocity and correspondingly greater armour penetration.] Those guns were issued to 90th Battery and were not committed until 22 October. In the meantime, gun drill and general training was carried out by 90th Battery, which was in reserve.

On 17 October, 2nd Brigade, supported by 57th Battery moved through 1st Brigade and went into action on the latter’s right. Both brigades were now on the banks of the Donagaglia River. The weather became unfavourable and operations consequently slowed down.

The 27th Battery relieved 51st Battery on 18 October when 3rd CIB relieved 1st CIB. The following day RHQ moved up route 9, the road leading to Cesena, and stopped in a farm house about 2,000 yards (1,820 metres) north of Savignano. This was in a gun area and the enemy’s counter-battery work was both accurate and heavy. During one of the ensuing concentrations, at 1930 hours, Sergeant J. Newton, the pay sergeant, was seriously wounded losing both an arm and a leg.

By 20 October, the 27th Battery had reached Cesena while the 57th Battery were also up to the River Savio on the right. This river was crossed by 2nd CIB on 22 October. Here, for the first time, the new 2-pounders were put into action when Lieutenant G. E. Weidmark of the 90th Battery took a troop of them into 2nd CIB’s bridgehead. For this operation, this troop was under command of 57th Battery. The balance of this battery’s guns was across the river by 24 October. Due to the state of the ground, the guns were towed in by jeeps and carriers. Lieutenant D. A. Harkness, the same day, deployed three more 2-pounder guns in this area.



During the night the enemy retired and although the infantry advanced rapidly all the next day they did not regain contact until they reached their objectives on the Ronca River. No further advances were made, and 56th British Division relieved 1st Canadian Infantry Division a few days later. The regiment moved back to Riccione for its second rest period in that town.

Second Rest Period in Riccione (28 October to 28 November 1944)

Although the regiment arrived in Riccione on 28 October, the batteries and RHQ were not all in billets until 31 October. Once again the regiment was fortunate in securing good accommodation. An NCO's school was set up to train the junior NCOs of the regiment. Florence and Rome were both available as leave centres and a large number of officers and men were able to visit civilization once more. Officers and NCOs were also sent on course to the Royal Artillery Training Depot at Eboli and Lt-Col McCordick himself went down there on a regimental commanders refresher course and in his absence Major G. T. White commanded the regiment.

No rest period would be a rest period without schemes, and all batteries carried out river crossing exercises using Class II and Class V rafts. These were both night and day exercises. The CRA's pennant was awarded to the battery, which crossed the river in the shortest time. For the third time, 27th Battery won this pennant.

On 25 November, Lt-Col A. H. Warr arrived to take over command of the regiment and Lt-Col McCordick became Commanding Officer of the 1st Field Regiment, RCHA. On 28 November, Gunner W. R. Porteous died from injuries received when he was hit by a tank transporter while walking along the road at night. The same day, a warning order was received that the regiment would be going back into action.

Lamone and Senio Rivers

In the forthcoming action, the regiment expected to be operating over country in which there were many rivers and creeks and through which ran very poor roads. The weather conditions made this ground very soft for the movement of vehicles and, in view of this, the regiment was reorganized using 6-pounder guns in three batteries and with the 90th Battery supplying two troops of 2-pounder guns. The echelons [unit support vehicles and personnel] were cut down to the minimum of vehicles. The remainder of the equipment, 17-pounder troops complete with personnel, vehicles, and guns were formed into a regimental group, which was under command of Captain Barker. These were held in the divisional "X" area, where the men enjoyed the comparative comfort of billets in Cattolica. The regimental "X" area consisted of 158 Other Ranks, 48 vehicles, and 19 guns. The attached officers also remained in "X" area.

On 29 November, 27th Battery, moving with 3rd Brigade, left on its way to the front. The following day was spent just south of the Montone River waiting for the three-brigade attack to commence from the bridgehead on the far side. The 3rd Brigade attacked at 0900 hours on 1 December. They were supported by 27th Battery, who had under command two 2-pounder troops from the 90th Battery. Some rocket-firing P-47 Thunderbolt aircraft helped in the preliminary



bombardment of the enemy positions. This was the first time that any troops of the regiment had watched this type of aircraft at work. As feared, the roads were very bad and all operations were also hampered by foggy weather at night. By 3 December, the 3rd Brigade had worked up close to the town of Russi.

The 1st Brigade moved through Russi to the Lamone River. Here the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment (HPER) attempted a crossing but were not successful. The 51st Battery had two troops of “Little Johns” from the 90th Battery under command for this phase of the operation.

As we were obviously going to meet stiff resistance and have to force a crossing it was decided to form two additional 6-pounder troops. “X” and “Y” Troops thus came into being, their equipment and personnel coming from “X” area. On 5 December, 1st Brigade again crossed the Lamone River. The attack this time was on a brigade scale, with the Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR) on the left and the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment on the right. A narrow but fairly deep bridgehead was established, as there was little opposition at first. By 0630 hours the following morning, two “Little Johns”, towed by jeeps, and two 6-pounders of “E” Troop were across the River. One 2-pounder and jeep under Sergeant J. B. Bailey of the 90th Battery, moved with “B” Company of the RCR along the far bank of the Lamone River. This Company was heavily counter-attacked, with the company commander killed, and company headquarters taken prisoner. Sergeant Bailey and his detachment were surrounded, but managed to fight their way out. This counter attack pressed on and the RCR had to withdraw to their start line on the near bank of the river. Sergeant Bailey led his detachment back to the initial bridgehead where he had previously sited a gun. Here he deployed both detachments with small arms and held this position, guarding the approach to the bridgehead, until the last of the infantry had withdrawn. For his outstanding leadership, courage and devotion to duty, Sergeant Bailey was awarded the Military Medal.

This unsuccessful crossing cost the regiment two 6-pounders, two 2-pounders, and two jeeps. The detachments of these guns all managed to fight their way back to safety. The abandoned guns were disabled and the striker cases brought back by the detachments. On 5 December, Tac RHQ [tactical regimental headquarters] moved into the railway station at Russi.

During the next few days, the division was busy re-grouping in preparation for yet another attack, this time 3rd Brigade would “carry the ball”. The 48th Highlanders were placed under command of 3rd Brigade for this forthcoming attack. The 27th Battery in support of 3rd Brigade was operating with three 6-pounder troops and two 2-pounder troops. The regimental plan for the support of the 3rd Brigade crossing, which was to be on a three-battalion front, was that there would be two 2-pounder guns in each assaulting battalion’s area. As soon as the bridgehead had been secured, 6-pounder guns would relieve the 2-pounders.

Lieutenant A. R. Moore was wounded in the eye by mortar fire on 6 December. The regiment later learned that he lost the sight of this eye. Gunner W. T. Loreno was mortally wounded and a sergeant slightly wounded at the same time. All three were men of the 51st Battery.



During 7 and 9 December, no effort was made to cross the river but “F” Troop of the 51st Battery engaged an observation post on the far bank at 500 yards (450 metres) range and scored 69 hits.

On the night of 10 December at 2130 hours the leading troops of 3rd Brigade crossed the Lamone River and gained a bridgehead on the far bank. By first light the 2-pounder anti-tank guns were deployed in the battalion areas, and by 0800 hours, two troops of 6-pounders had crossed and were moving up into position. Getting the guns across the river was no small task. On each side of the river were high steep dykes and although the river itself was narrow, it was swift-flowing and was spanned by only a Class II floating bridge. It required the combined efforts of a whole troop to manhandle one gun across the river. This was the morning of 11 December and when the bridgehead was consolidated, 1st Brigade with the Carleton and York Regiment under command passed through 3rd CIB.

By 2359 hours, the RCR and the HPER had reached the Vecchio Canal, southeast of Bagnacavallo, the brigade’s ultimate objective.

On 12 December, 1st Brigade was across the Naviglio Canal to the northeast of Bagnacavallo. The following day, this Brigade was counter attacked with tanks and self-propelled guns, and the infantry were forced back to the line of the Naviglio Canal. They did, however, manage to maintain a small bridgehead on the enemy side of the canal. One 2-pounder with the Carleton and York Regiment immobilized a tank, but the enemy recovered it after dark. At 0800 hours, during this same counter-attack, the 6-pounder gun commanded by Sergeant Menzies destroyed one tank and forced another to withdraw. Sergeant Menzies was killed in this engagement. He had shown great coolness and courage, as the first tank was not destroyed until it was less than 300 yards (275 metres) away and had received three hits. His gun position was now known to the enemy and neutralizing fire was being brought to bear upon him. In spite of this, he was still able to engage the second tank, and it was during this engagement that he was killed. In yet another counter-attack, Gunners J. D. Breeze and R. Doucette were responsible for knocking out a tank and damaging another. All these tanks went to the credit of 51st Battery.

On the night of 13 December, 2nd Brigade supported by 57th Battery with the 104th SP Battery of 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, under command, relieved 1st Brigade.

The division spent 14 December in re-grouping so as to have all three brigades up. During the day 51st Battery shot up some houses on the outskirts of Bagnacavallo, and “G” Troop of the 57th Battery claimed one Tiger tank disabled.

One of the forward gun detachments of the 27th Battery on 15 December, was rather surprised to see an ammunition vehicle of the Royal 22nd Regiment drive through the front lines. Sergeant Berthiaume, the detachment commander, was forced to watch the personnel in the vehicle marched away as prisoners. Before the Germans could move the vehicle, he fired seven rounds into it and destroyed it.

Although on the following day the 2nd and 3rd Brigades changed areas, the 27th and 57th Batteries did not move, as the condition of the ground was such that it would have been almost impossible to bring the guns out of action. This ended 27th Battery’s affiliation with 3rd Brigade.



All day, the shelling of the forward areas was heavy and continuous with houses being the favourite targets. No casualties were caused in the regiment by this, but Gunner N.M. Cuthbertson of the 90th Battery, was killed by a sniper. The shelling did account for two 2-pounders of the 57th Battery on 17 December.

The 1st Brigade attacked once more on 18 December, but were unsuccessful and were forced to retire across the Vecchio Canal. None of the regiment's guns were concerned in this as they had not yet moved across the canal. In the 2nd Brigade sector, 57th Battery had one sergeant wounded while engaging a tank.

On 19 December, 2nd Brigade in their turn, launched an attack which passed through 3rd CIB in the bridgehead on the Naviglio Canal. This attack met heavy opposition and was over ground that had been heavily mined. The next day, the 27th Battery that was now supporting 2nd Brigade, had one 6-pounder and jeep destroyed when the gun went over a mine as it was being manhandled through a shell crater in the road. Gunner J. J. Hogan was killed, Bombardier Kulakowski lost a leg, and Sergeant MacDougall was wounded. "B" Troop of the 27th Battery took one prisoner during this attack. That night it was reported that the enemy was withdrawing to the line of the Senio River, and on the morning of 21 December, this was found to be a fact.

The brigades and batteries spent the day consolidating the ground held by 1st CIB to the southwest of Bagnacavallo, 2nd CIB to the northwest, and 3rd CIB in the centre in Bagnacavallo itself. The 51st Battery had one 6-pounder knocked out by mortar fire, and the 57th Battery lost one gun and jeep through shell fire.

On 22 December the balance of RHQ moved into Russi. Throughout the division, arrangements were being made for a Christmas in the line. It was proposed that 1st and 2nd Brigades, with 27th, 51st, and 90th Batteries in support, would remain in action. The 3rd CIB and the 57th Battery were to be in reserve. It looked as though it would be a white Christmas as it snowed heavily on 23 December, and although no more snow fell, there was still some on the ground on Christmas Day. Christmas Day, though spent in the line by the majority of the troops, was claimed to be one of the most successful Christmases that they had had in the army. Even our most forward gun detachments did not miss their Christmas dinner and there was a double issue of rum for all.

On the day after Christmas, Lieutenant E. S. Kaufman of the 51st Battery ran over a mine while driving in a jeep. He was shaken up, but fortunately suffered nothing more serious than a burst eardrum. This was, however, sufficient to give him a rest in hospital. Following their relief, 51st Battery moved into a rest area around the town of Godo on 28 December. The division was now in a static role in front of the Senio River and activity was confined to patrolling. Batteries and brigades alternately spent one week in the rest area. Some batteries, when their turn for relief came, left their guns in the line to be taken over by the succeeding battery. This was due to the poor condition of the roads and the proximity of the guns to the front lines. The brigade and battery in rest carried out a reconnaissance of several areas where they would take up positions should an enemy breakthrough occur. These were sited so that they would be able to contain any penetration while steps were taken to restore the situation. During this period, each battery in the line had a troop of SP guns from 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, under command, and these



carried out many harassing fire tasks on the enemy positions. On 3 January 1945, the 2nd Brigade put in a small attack to straighten their line and the 27th Battery, while deploying their guns, lost L/Bombardier Marette and Gunner A. C. Jack, who were killed, while Bombardier Williams was seriously wounded. Three days later, the 17-pounder troops were back in action on the dissolution of the regimental "X" area.

The regiment started an infantry anti-tank training school in Ravenna with Captain A. E. Foubister in charge, with Lieutenants J. T. Wimble and J. E. Goodine and four NCOs as instructors. It was proposed to have three classes, one for each brigade as it took its turn in rest.

Major White and thirteen ORs left for Canada on rotational leave on 13 January 1945. Major Halfhide was appointed Acting/2ic and Captain Mooney was promoted to A/Major and took command of 57th Battery.

The 27th Battery, after 24 hours in rest as part of 2nd Brigade Group, moved back into the line on 21 January, when 2nd Brigade took over from the Italians of the Cremona group. Ravenna was now providing some recreational facilities for officers and ORs, and the Ravenna Officers Club was opened on 30 January. The Commanding Officer and some of the regimental officers were able to attend this opening and from all reports it must have been quite a party.

The regiment suffered its last battle casualty in Italy when Gunner D.H. Moran of the 57th Battery was killed in the town square of Bagnacavallo. He was sitting in a barbershop when a 105-mm shell fell in the square.

The 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, ceased to be in support of 1st Canadian Infantry Division when they moved out of the line on 10 February. Their place was taken by SP batteries of the 93rd Argyll and Sutherland Anti-tank Regiment, RA.

The 1st Canadian Corps Headquarters followed the corps anti-tank regiment out, and 5th British Corps assumed command of the 1st Canadian Division.

By this time rumours of impending moves were very strong and when the advance party of the 4th Maharatta Anti-tank Regiment, 8th Indian Division, arrived in the regimental area everyone was certain that we would shortly be on the move. This regiment relieved the 1st Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, on 23 February, and on the following day the batteries started to move off with their brigades to the regimental concentration area at Corridonia. By the end of February the regiment was concentrated in this town after spending most of the winter in the line. The regiment was now on its way to France, but this fact was known by very few as the whole move was kept Top Secret. To save unnecessary wear from a long road journey, 17-pounders and half-tracks were sent direct to Leghorn by rail from Riccione. During the time that the remainder of the regiment spent in Corridonia, each battery received a thorough inspection by the CO. Staff tables were also prepared on personnel and equipment for the sea journey. Once again all distinguishing insignias were removed before the first battery left Corridonia. One tragedy occurred before the regiment moved, when Gunner W.J. McElheron was killed in a jeep accident.

The move to the west coast was made in three stages: the first to Foligno, the second to Pontassieve, and finally the destination, Harrod's Camp near Leghorn. At this time Major



Mooney left on rotational leave to Canada and Captain Barker was promoted to A/Major to command 57th Battery. While in Harrod's Camp, sight-seeing tours to Pisa were organized and nearly all personnel of the regiment were able to inspect the Leaning Tower.

Finally on 9 March, the 51st Battery embarked for France and the other batteries and RHQ followed at intervals. The sea journey took approximately 28 hours and the vessels used were Liberty ships and Landing Ship Tanks. For the greater part of the personnel, the first sight of a French town was when they debarked at Marseilles. For the trip through France the batteries continued to move independently, and the regiment was not together again until its arrival in Belgium. This journey lasted six days and each night was spent in a special staging camp. After Italy, the countryside of France with its people who seemed genuinely glad to see us was a welcome sight. On arrival in Belgium, RHQ and 57th Battery were billeted in Hellegat, 51st and 90th Batteries in Niel, and 27th Battery in Schelle. The people of Belgium, like the people of France, were most friendly and welcomed us late-comers as liberators. They gave dances for us. They threw open their homes to all. They could not do enough for us. Our stay in Belgium will always be a pleasant memory and it was with regret that we moved away. So many were the friends that we made that, since then, many members of the regiment have gone back to spend their privilege leave in the homes of the people with whom they were once billeted.



Move to Action in Holland (3 April 1945)

On 3 April 1945, the regiment began to move to the area of the Reichswald Forest in Germany. A new war establishment was now in effect whereby the regiment was made up of one SP Battery, equipped with 17-pounder Valentines, and three batteries each with two troops of 17-pounder tractor-drawn guns and one SP troop. En route to Germany, the 90th Battery, the SP Battery, and the SP troop from each of the other batteries dropped out of the regimental convoy at S'Hertogenbosch for training with the 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, in the area of Berlicum. The towed troops underwent firing practice at Lommel Ranges on 5 April. The regiment concentrated in the Reichswald Forest on 6 April, and on the following day, the batteries started moving up with their brigades to an area east of Zutphen. As our own SPs were still in training, each battery had under command an SP troop from the 6th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA.

On 11 April, the 1st Canadian Infantry Division forced the crossing of the IJssel River. The 2nd Brigade supported by 27th Battery led the attack. The guns were towed across a floating bridge by 15-cwt trucks and Humber scout cars, because the bridge would not carry a half-track. The half-tracks and SPs were ferried across the river on Class 40 rafts. By 1200 hours on 12 April, 27th Battery guns were in position, and by 1430 hours the guns of 51st Battery were across the river and moving up to the support of 1st Brigade. The 57th Battery had made the crossing by 0430 hours 13 April 45.

During the ensuing fighting all batteries managed to collect some prisoners for themselves. In the first phase, 3rd Brigade was attacking along the Wilp-Apeldoorn road and took the towns of Posterenk and Achterhoek. The 57th Battery made good use of their SPs in house clearing and the 17-pounders, which were not being used at the moment, were not deployed until 1830 hours on the evening of 13 April. The guns of the 27th Battery reached the area of Voorst on 14 April. The score of prisoners to date was: 27th Battery - five, 51st Battery - one, and 57th Battery - two. This was definitely a war of movement, and the resistance encountered was nothing as compared with what the division had experienced so recently in Italy.

On 15 April, 2nd Brigade turned south and advanced rapidly. The 1st Brigade was advancing on Apeldoorn with the 3rd Brigade on its left to the south. Lieutenant Heath of the 6th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, whose troop was under command of 51st Battery, engaged an enemy strong point in a wood with an SP and a Honey tank. After firing several rounds without result, accompanied by two men, he advanced on foot, throwing hand grenades, and came back with 13 prisoners. The 3rd CIB was now within 200 yards (180 metres) of the Apeldoorn Canal, and the SP troop was moving just behind the leading infantry, giving close support. There was a little shelling, but the continual sniping was much more dangerous, and 51st Battery had one man wounded. L/Sergeant H. G. Husted and Gunner W. O. Jorheim of the 57th Battery captured two snipers who had been shooting at their gun detachment. The 27th Battery also took two prisoners.

The 2nd Brigade crossed the Apeldoorn Canal several miles south of Apeldoorn on 17 April without opposition and struck off in a westerly direction. They finally joined up with 5th Canadian Armoured Division in Barneveld. During this move, the tractor-drawn 17-pounders were never deployed, and the brunt of the work fell on the SP troop. Five prisoners were taken.



The 3rd Brigade followed 2nd Brigade over the canal. This brigade moved north to within approximately one mile of Apeldoorn, then turned west and made for Laeger. The 1st Brigade moved through Apeldoorn and headed down the main road to Amersfoort.

After a 48-hour pause to mop up in the area of Barneveld, the brigades moved up to the line of the Amersfoort Canal. In this area the 17-pounder towed guns were deployed in battalion localities, and the SP troops were allotted to whichever battalion required their services. The SP troops of the 57th and 27th Batteries engaged a large tower in Amersfoort. Although there was no visible result, this harassing fire did make the tower untenable for the German OP parties.

Our own SPs finally arrived on 22 April, but we were unable to use them in action as the equipment had excessive recoil, which was under investigation by RCME. The official truce came into effect on 28 April, and all offensive action ceased. When, on 2 May, our own SPs were declared serviceable, the troops of the 6th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, returned to their own unit thus bringing to a close an association that we were sorry to see end. The work of these troops had been of a high standard, and the cooperation between them and our own men was smooth and efficient. For his work during this period, Lieutenant A. Keyes of the 6th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, was mentioned-in-despatches.

At 0800 hours on 5 May 45, the order to Cease Fire was given, when the German armies in Holland and Northern Germany surrendered unconditionally.

The following day, 1st Canadian Divisional Artillery concentrated their guns in an "X" area outside of Apeldoorn under command of A/Major E. St. J. C. Murdoch, MC. The regiments of the divisional artillery were now to be employed as an infantry brigade, in guarding dumps and disarming the German armies in Holland.

Captain J. S. Mulkerns was promoted to the rank of A/Major and posted to the 4th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, while Captain A. E. Foubister took command of a battery in 2nd Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, as A/Major. On 8 May 15, the regiment moved from the area of Barneveld to Leiden, a distance of 60 miles. This move took us through the German lines where there was the incongruous sight of hundreds of fully armed German soldiers standing self-consciously in the midst of the cheering Dutch people. The further into German-occupied territory we travelled, the more moving became our reception. The towns were gay with bunting and flags, and the streets were packed with people. Everywhere, hastily-erected signs bid us welcome. Men and women, old and young, were singing the Wilhelmus with tears running down their faces. In Leiden, the streets were lined with men and women of the Dutch underground army in uniform and, if possible, our reception there surpassed anything met before. The reactions to victory of a people who had never doubted that their day of liberty would come were a sight that will not be soon forgotten. More than one man in the regiment found that he had a lump in his throat and that his eyes were damp.

Such was our arrival in Western Holland.

The regiment was concentrated at Poelgeest in Oegstgeest, a village on the outskirts of Leiden. With the 2nd Light Anti-aircraft (LAA) Regiment, RCA, the 1st Anti-tank Regiment formed a unit known as "Bishop Force", which was under the command of Lt-Col R. M. Bishop,



CO of the LAA regiment. The tasks of this force were to guard dumps in an area stretching from Amsterdam to Rotterdam, and to carry out patrols to round up any Germans in this area who were still at large. These duties were divided equally among the batteries.

The people of Leiden and Oegstgeest entertained the regiment on many occasions, and nobody was ever at a loss to know how to spend his spare time.

The regiment took part in four parades. On 21 May, four officers and 125 ORs were the regimental representatives in a victory parade in The Hague, at which Prince Bernhard took the salute in the absence of Queen Wilhelmina. On 8 June, there was a mounted march past in Leiden when the CRA, Brigadier W. S. Ziegler, DSO, took the salute, and this was followed on 10 June by the 1st Canadian Infantry Division march past in Rotterdam when Gen H.D.G. Crerar, CH, CD, DSO, and many other high-ranking officers were present. The regiment was represented by three officers and 72 ORs on 28 June, in the parade in honour of Queen Wilhelmina's first appearance in Amsterdam after VE day. The turnout of men and equipment on these parades was excellent, and the freshly-painted appearance of vehicles and guns was in sharp contrast to their lately-doffed battle garb.

On 10 June, Lt-Col Warr relinquished command of the regiment on his departure to take over the 2/3rd Canadian Anti-tank Regiment, RCA, Canadian Army Occupation Force (CAOF). The regiment was very sorry to see yet another CO leave, and wished him the best of luck in his new duties.

Repatriation started when Sergeant W. R. Boivin, L/Sergeant W. E. Thompson, A/Sergeant J. Ibbetson, and Gunner W. R. Wismer left the regiment to proceed on No. 1 Repatriation Draft on 3 June 1945. At this time, men were also leaving to join the Canadian Army Pacific Force or the CAOF.

The regiment turned in the towed 17-pounders and the half-tracks on 20 June. The SPs were turned in on 28 June. It is always difficult for an artilleryman to say goodbye to his gun and this time was no exception. The turn-in of vehicles commenced on 13 July, but some vehicles will be retained until the disbandment of the regiment prior to its departure from this theatre.

Throughout its entire period of service overseas, the men of the regiment have received parcels, cigarettes, magazines, and newspapers not only from their immediate family and friends, but also from these organizations:

- 27th Battery - The Artillery Branch of the Montreal Soldier's Wives Association.
- 51st Battery - The Women's Auxiliary of the Ottawa Artillery
- 57th Battery - The Women's Auxiliary of the 13th Field Brigade
- 90th Battery - The Girls-They-Left-Behind-Them Club

The regiment as a whole received cigarettes from the Buckshee Fund and from the Toronto Hotels Soldiers' fund. We are very grateful to all these people who have given their time and money to provide us with these luxuries, and thus given us the assurance that "we have not been forgotten".



This brings the history of the regiment to the end of the month of July 1945, and at present the regiment is near Utrecht, waiting impatiently for the order to move from Holland on its long journey home.

The tides of war have taken this regiment to many lands. Though in the future many will forget, and to some the past will go unheeded, there will be many for whom the names Pachino - Leonforte - Agira - Sangro - Moro - Ortona - Hitler Line - Gothic Line - San Fortunado - Lamone - Senio - and Ijssel will always hold a deep significance.



List of Appendices

- A Regimental Commanding Officers and Second-in-command
- B Officer Casualties
- C Other Ranks Casualties
- D Awards - Officers and ORs
- E Officers with CAPF and CAOOF
- F Collage of Photographs



Appendix A

Regimental Commanding Officers

Lt-Col	G.W.F.	Johnson	5 September 1939
Lt-Col	T.M.	Medland	3 March 1941
Lt-Col	H.M.	Hague	27 June 1942
Lt-Col	T.Y.	Wills	23 November 1942
Lt-Col	G.O.	Hutchison	10 June 1943
Lt-Col	E.F.	McCordick	17 June 1944
Lt-Col	A.H.	Warr	27 November 1944
Lt-Col	G.O.	Hutchison	3 July 1945

Regimental Seconds-in-Command

Major	R.E.	Bliss	16 November 1939
Major	L.A.	Devine	11 November 1940
Major	G.O.	Hutchison	24 July 1941
Major	J.A.	Gillies	10 November 1941
Major	D.S.	Harkness	2 December 1942
Major	G.T.	White	20 January 1944
Major	D.S.	Halfhide	13 January 1945
Major	G.T.	White	10 June 1945



Appendix B

Officer Casualties

Killed in Action

Captain	J.J.	Coatsworth	28-12-43
Lieutenant	C.H.	Waterous	26-7-43

Died of Wounds

Major	J.H.	Sutherland	28-8-44
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Wounded

Lieutenant	J.A.	Bourne	15-7-43	
Lieutenant	N.W.	Clarke	20-5-44	
Lieutenant	J.P.	Doddridge	10-12-43	
Lieutenant	W.S.	Dunfield	26-7-43	
Lieutenant	R.B.	Ferguson	21-12-43	
Lieutenant	G.A.	Hobbs	15-4-44	
Lieutenant	G.A.	Hobbs	14-10-44	(Second Casualty)
Lieutenant	K.M.	Johnson	25-1-44	
Lieutenant	E.S.	Kaufman	26-12-44	
Captain	J.M.	Lindsay	9-4-44	
Lieutenant	C.O.D.	Magee	23-5-44	
Major	M.Y.	McLean	29-12-44	(Remained on Duty)
Lieutenant	W.K.	McMenamon	25-12-44	
Captain	J.G.M.	Mooney	3-1-45	
Lieutenant	A.R.	Moore	6-12-44	



Appendix C

Other Rank Casualties

Killed

M 635	Gunner	Adamson	R.	26-12-43	
D7057	L/Sergeant	Andreoli	J.P.	17-12-43	
H 100346	Gunner	Barthelette	G.	1-10-43	
D 7006	Gunner	Bedard	L.	5-8-43	
C 10362	Gunner	Catral	W.E. Jr.	5-9-44	
C 4081	Gunner	Clarke	J.G.	26-7-43	
E 5336	Gunner	Copeman	D.	3-1-44	
G 7349	Gunner	Cuthbertson	N.M.	16-12-44	(Second Casualty)
D 112004	Gunner	Fairbarn	C.E.	14-12-43	(Prev Reported)
Missing)					
E 014299	Gunner	Fontaine	A.	4-12-43	
D 118062	Gunner	Forget	E.	4-9-44	
C 10344	Gunner	Higgins	A.	21-7-43	
M 106513	Gunner	Hoggan	J.A.	20-12-44	(Second Casualty)
G 6036	Gunner	Hooper	R.M.	12-12-43	
M 105936	Gunner	Jack	A.M.	4-1-45	
E 0185	Gunner	Johnson	B.	15-9-44	(Second Casualty)
G 4311	A/Bombardier	Kimball	K.C.	8-8-44	
D 7054	L/Bombardier	Marotte	A.	4-1-45	
K 81826	Gunner	Martin	S.V.	24-5-44	
C 10478	Sergeant	Menzies	E.J.	13-12-44	
E 0047	Gunner	Moran	D.H.	6-2-45	
B 44685	Gunner	Osborne	J.	1-7-43	
H 59572	Sergeant	Reid	J.A.	17-9-44	
D 131028	Gunner	Rosenthal	G.	25-7-43	
L 74514	Gunner	Strome	F.G.	21-7-43	
E 0088	Gunner	Suddard	E.W.	16-12-43	
H 12075	Gunner	Vincent	K.H.	4-12-43	



Died of Wounds

G 4067	Gunner	Amos	R.E.	18-12-44	(second casualty)	
D 7110	Bombardier	Chapatis	J.	17-12-43	(prev. reported)	wounded)
B 44951	Gunner	Loreno	W.T.	6-12-44		
D 131325	Gunner	McGinn	F.	23-5-44		
C 9561	Gunner	McIntosh	J.D.	4-9-44		
C 101830	Gunner	McPhadden	M.O.	20-5-44	(prev. reported)	wounded)
H 66450	Gunner	Porteous	W.R.	27-11-44	(prev. reported)	wounded)
G 4128	Gunner	Sleep	D.E.	12-12-43	(prev. reported)	wounded)
G 4179	Gunner	Upton	W.J.	18-7-43	(prev. reported)	wounded)
D 7055	L/Sergeant	Whitticks	D.A.	17-9-44	(second wound)	

Died

G 49399	Gunner	Burns	J.L.	8-5-43	in England
B 5918	Gunner	Cousins	R.	10-1-42	in England
D 57364	Corporal	Leclech	R.	8-5-43	in England
D 7124	L/Bombardier	Lippiatt	E.F.	22-9-40	in England
K 72665	Gunner	Mahaney	W.H.	30-5-45	A.E.F.
D 7116	Gunner	McEhleron	W.J.	27-2-45	A.F.H.Q.
F 97615	Gunner	McNeil	F.	20-6-43	in England
C 10325	Gunner	Ryan	P.	13-9-40	in England
E 0154	Gunner	Stevens	E.M.	8-7-40	in England
B 110399	Gunner	Tedcastle	B.J.	13-5-45	A.E.F.
E 0071	Gunner	Terry	D.D.	12-8-43	A.F.H.Q.
M 24157	Gunner	Thomson	D.	3-2-42	in England
B 6282	Gunner	Windsor	C.T.	6-1-42	in England

Wounded

E 0039	Sergeant	Adams	J.A.	18-12-44	
E 0137	Gunner	Adams	P.H.	5-7-43	
E 0142	Gunner	Adams	P.L.J.	17-1-44	
M 642	Gunner	Aebly	E.C.	29-7-43	
F 65881	Gunner	Alexander	R.E.	20-7-43	
L 18299	Gunner	Allen	J.W.	19-4-44	
A 105805	Gunner	Allan	J.A.	13-11-44	(B.C. Injury)
C 10391	Gunner	Collins	R.O.	16-9-44	



G 7405	Gunner	Condo	F.	1-2-44	
D 7123	TSM	Cookman	K.C.	24-5-44	
C 50015	Sgt	Coombes	H.V.	23-5-44	
D 132322	Gunner	Cousins	R.	3-1-44	
D 81702	L/Sergeant	Craig	C.T.	14-9-44	
G 4085	Gunner	Critchlow	D.	12-12-43	
C 10421	Gunner	Cronk	C.C.	1-1-44	(Remained on Duty)
G 19737	Gunner	Crosby	J.E.	23-5-44	
F 64760	Gunner	Crowell	C.G.	14-12-44	
C 36711	Gunner	Curry	M.R.	22-12-44	
G 7349	Gunner	Cuthbertson	N.M.	26-12-43	
A 50266	Private	Davidson	F.W.	16-4-45	
F 87854	Gunner	Desmond	D.G.	1-2-44	
C 10383	Private	Dolan	E.G.	10-5-44	
D 118123	Gunner	Dolbec	M.	5-7-43	
A 28463	Gunner	Dorman	J.C.	10-5-44	
D 71059	Gunner	Dow	G.A.	14-9-44	(Remained on Duty)
D 7137	Sergeant	Dube	A.A.	29-12-44	(Remained on Duty)
D 7023	L/Sergeant	DuMagee	O.	15-9-44	(Remained on Duty)
E 23569	Gunner	Dessault	J.R.	7-8-43	
M 50987	Gunner	Duxbury	C.	23-5-44	
C 30422	Gunner	Exard	L.H.	28-12-43	
A 29520	Gunner	Fairbairn	E.W.	3 -2-44	
G 4133	Sergeant	Fallon	M.A.	26-12-43	
G 4032	Gunner	Ferris	G.L.	31-1-44	
C 48802	Gunner	Fisher	A.E.	24-5-44	
B 17754	Gunner	Flagle	A.B.	6-12-43	
G 4099	Bombardier	Fraser	K.W.	5-7-43	
E 0054	Gunner	Furlong	H.E.	5-7-43	
E 0115	Gunner	Gagne	J.L.	29-7-43	
F 77447	Gunner	Gaudet	E.	31-7-43	
G 6032	Gunner	Gillman	R.E.	18-1-45	
G 4893	Gunner	Goodine	R.I.	18-9-44	
C 10302	Gunner	Grace	E.J.	11-7-43	
D 7067	Gunner	Grenier	A.	5-7-43	
C 38730	Gunner	Griffin	K.E.	18-4-44	
F 65466	Bombardier	Hamm	R.B.	5-9-44	
F 65466	Bombardier	Hamm	R.B.	17-12-44	(Second Casualty)
D 7169	L/Bombardier	Hammerbeck	R.	5-7-43	
C 48598	Gunner	Hancock	M.L.	23-5-44	
B 44991	Gunner	Harbar	E.	18-5-44	
M 106513	Gunner	Hoggan	J.A.	13-9-44	(Remained on Duty)
D 7142	L/Sergeant	Holmes	B.B.	23-5-44	



D 7161	Gunner	Holmes	L.G.	22-11-44	
L 168	A/L/Bombardier	Horsman	J.F.	22-2-44	
A 28571	Gunner	Hume	W.H.	21-12-44	
C 10424	Sergeant	Hurd	A.E.	16-12-44	
E 0185	Gunner	Johnson	B.	5-2-44	
C 10390	Gunner	Johnson	K.A.	10-12-44	
L 6670	Bombardier	Kulakowski	A.	20-12-44	(Second Casualty)
L 6670	Bombardier	Kulakowski	A.	11-9-44	
D 132365	Gunner	Lamer	J.F.	20-7-43	
M 100422	Gunner	Langen	H.J.	2-10-43	
M 4129	Gunner	Larocque	I.	25-7-43	
G 4056	L/Bombardier	Leachman	G.L.	21-12-43	
G 49512	Gunner	LeBlanc	E.J.	18-5-44	
F 65919	Gunner	LeBlanc	F.J.	15-9-44	
L 10458	L/Bombardier	Leigh	A.H.	13-9-44	(Remained on Duty)
G 21042	Gunner	L'Italien	E.W.	3-8-43	
C 48522	Gunner	Lloyd	H.E.	17-9-44	
M 100703	Gunner	Lockwood	A.R.	26-5-44	
G 4075	Gunner	Lofstrom	A.F.	25-12-43	
G 4054	BSM	Lofstrom	J.W.F.	10-12-43	
G 4054	BSM	Lofstrom	J.W.F.	25-12-44	(Second Casualty)
F 86239	Gunner	Long	R.A.	9-12-44	(Battle Casualty)
F 89650	Gunner	MacDonald	A.S.	5-7-43	
F 89650	Gunner	MacDonald	A.S.	23-5-44	(Second Casualty)
F 77450	Gunner	MacDonald	H.W.	5-7-43	
G 4329	L/Bombardier	MacDonald	S.Y.	31-1-44	
F 32100	Gunner	MacDougall	D.L.	25-4-44	
G 4108	Bombardier	Malone	W.T.	12-5-44	
E 0055	Gunner	McCauley	J.P.	15-7-43	
E 0031	Sergeant	McDougal	W.M.	20-12-44	
G 5067	Gunner	McFarlane	R.M.	23-5-44	
K 76833	Gunner	McGovern	H.	23-5-44	
C 10312	Sergeant	McInnis	E.A.	6-12-44	
C 10312	Sergeant	McInnis	E.A.	21-7-43	(Second Casualty)
L 110082	L/Bombardier	McKeachie	R.V.	7-12-43	
G 4122	Bombardier	McLaughlin	M.K.	12-12-43	
B 11266	Gunner	McMahon	J.V.	5-7-43	
G 4066	Sergeant	McPhail	R.W.	21-9-44	
L 74456	Gunner	Meyer	H.	17-4-44	
B 114518	Gunner	Michaud	L.	24-5-44	
B 110337	Gunner	Mohninger	A.	15-2-44	
C 50017	L/Bombardier	Moore	A.J.	5-7-43	
G 4022	L Sergeant	Moorhouse	H.C.	31-1-44	



A 103728	Gunner	Morrel	C.E.	21-7-43	
A 102718	Gunner	Mullaly	T.	7-12-43	
D 7114	Sergeant	Newton	J.C.	19-10-44	
C 48501	Gunner	Peters	J.E.	14-4-44	
M 35490	Gunner	Porterfield	N.J.	17-12-43	
A 89284	Gunner	Pollock	H.W.	21-12-43	
D 114895	Gunner	Proulx	P.E.	7-10-43	
M 65455	Gunner	Quinney	J.	18-5-44	
E 0083	L/Sergeant	Rabey	M.H.M.	6-12-43	
L 18424	Gunner	Realf	J.H.	18-2-45	
C 33678	Gunner	Reid	J.M.	21-7-43	
D 7027	Gunner	Royle	G.	23-7-43	
D 7026	A/Sergeant	Royle	L.	19-12-43	
G 3294	Bombardier	Rutledge	B.A.	15-12-44	(Remained on Duty)
F 77345	Gunner	Ryan	L.D.	26-12-44	
M 35079	Gunner	Sackett	G.	23-5-44	
C 10419	Gunner	Scharf	W.A.	12-10-44	
C 768	Gunner	Sigouin	J.A.	5-7-43	
B 44051	Gunner	Silverthorn	W.L.	14-9-44	
L 358	Gunner	Sitter	A.	4-12-43	
C 48741	Gunner	Smith	C.E.	14-9-44	
C 4288	L/Sergeant	Smith	M.F.	5-8-43	
A 28518	Gunner	Smith	P.	29-4-44	
H 100682	Gunner	Stefanyshyn	S.	16-12-43	
C 4139	L/Bombardier	Stewart	C.H.	12-12-43	
F 77380	Gunner	Stoddart	W.S.	27-7-43	
C 10433	Sergeant	Strangeways	H.L.	13-12-44	
G 4037	Gunner	Sturgeon	H.W.	8-6-44	
A 28706	Gunner	Sudickt	A.	13-7-43	
A 28706	Gunner	Sudicky	A.	26-5-44	(Second Casualty)
[This is the same man, but the difference in his name is in the original]					
B 113631	Gunner	Thomas	F.J.	26-12-44	
D 7044	Gunner	Thomas	W.	23-5-44	
D 7044	Gunner	Thomas	W.	23-12-44	(Second Casualty)
D 71077	Gunner	Thompson	E.J.	20-2-44	
G 50855	Gunner	Thompson	J.J.	20-12-44	
M 127	Gunner	Thompson	M.L.	16-8-43	
G 4173	L/ Sergeant	Thornton	M.C.	21-7-43	
D 7011	BSM	Toogood	G.	6-9-44	(Remained on Duty)
G 4244	L/Bombardier	Upton	R.W.	10-12-43	(Second Casualty)
G 4244	Gunner	Upton	R.W.	23-7-43	
B 8078	Gunner	Vair	R.	13-12-44	
M 173	Gunner	Ward	J.J.	5-7-43	



G 4016	Sergeant	Watt	R.	29-7-43
L 100370	Gunner	Wetzel	P.	17-2-44
G 4028	Gunner	White	G.B.	24-12-44
D 7055	L/Sergeant	Whitticks	D.A.	23-5-44
D 71209	Bombardier	Williams	H.	4-1-45
H 29059	Gunner	Wismer	W.R.	24-7-43

Casualties - Presumed Killed (Previously Reported as Missing)

E 0089	L/Sergeant	Bannier	W.A.	5-7-43
E 0082	Bombardier	Clark	J.W.	5-7-43
D 7074	Bombardier	Stankus	C.	5-7-43
E 0086	L/ Bombardier	Annett	W.H.	5-7-43
F 65567	Gunner	Ashe	R.J.	5-7-43
D 7168	Gunner	Belzil	A.R.	5-7-43
D 7107	Gunner	Keogh	L.C.	5-7-43
D 17385	Gunner	Martin	F.D.	5-7-43
D 7172	Gunner	Morton	R.	5-7-43
E 0021	Gunner	Seifert	H.D.	5-7-43

Released Prisoner of War

D-7200	Gunner	Brown	G.P.	6-5-45
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Total Casualties 256

[The numbers do not add up – there may be a page missing in the original]



Appendix D

Awards to Officers

Distinguished Service Order

Major G.A. Welsh

Bar to the DSO

Major G.A. Welsh

Military Cross

Captain (now Major)	H.	Burnett
Captain (now Major)	E.St.J.C.	Murdoch
Captain	G.C.	Evans

Mentioned in Dispatches

Captain	K.M.	Johnson
Lieutenant	G.E.	Weidmark
Lieutenant	J.E.	O'Neill

Awards to Other Ranks

Military Medal

G 4030	Sergeant	Towe	J.
G 4025	Sergeant	Bailey	J.B.
D 7097	L/Sergeant	Berthiame	L.
C 18557	L/Sergeant	Hope	A.
G 4333	Bombardier	Doucette	W.J.
G 4164	L/Bombardier	Bennett	R.A.
L 10458	L/Bombardier	Leigh	A.H.
D 7117	Gunner	Snow	H.J.
C 10444	Gunner	Breeze	J.D.

Mentioned in Dispatches

B 0071	Sergeant	Eden	J.W.
B 21586	Gunner	Newell	D.I.



Appendix E

Officers of the Regiment with the Canadian Army Pacific Force

Captain	J.E.	Ferguson
A/Captain	L.W.	Glanville
Lieutenant	H.B.	Cutten
Lieutenant	E.	Grant
Lieutenant	W.K.	McMenamon
Lieutenant	D.I.	Shaver

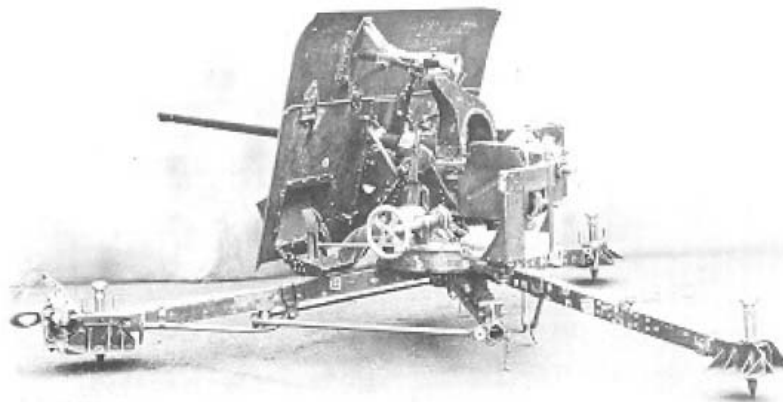
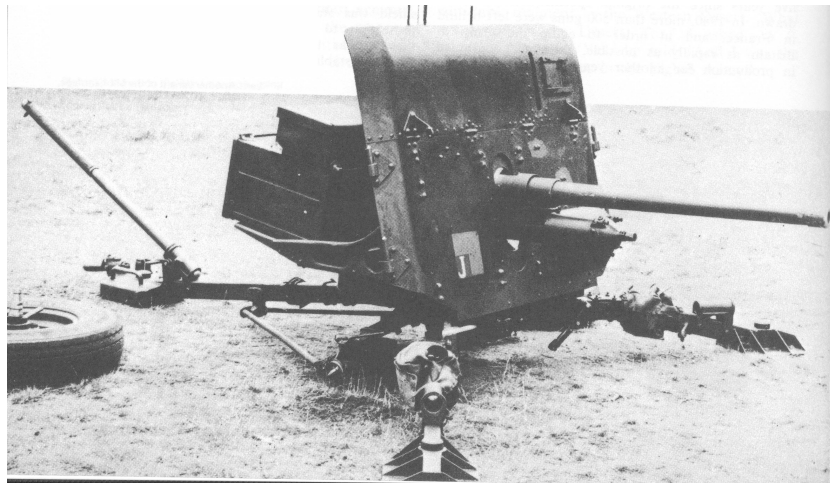
Officers of the Regiment with the Canadian Army Occupation Force

Lt-Col	A.H.	Warr
Major	D.J.	Halfhide, ED
Major	M.Y.	McLean
A/Major	E.St.J.C.	Murdoch, MC
Captain	C.K.	Kennedy
Captain	H.M.	Steckley
Captain	G.P.	Thomas
A/Captain	D.T.	Christie
A/ Captain	R.W.	Roderts
Lieutenant	J.E.	Goodine
Lieutenant	M.D.	Wheatley
Lieutenant	J.T.	Wimble

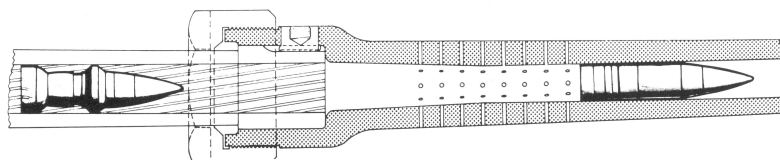


Appendix F

A Collage of Representative Photographs



The 2-pounder anti-tank gun. It was the standard British anti-tank gun from 1936 until 1942, when it was replaced by the 6-pounder. Canadian units used the gun until 1943, but never in operations (apart from the Littlejohn version used by 1st Antitank Regiment in Italy, and those mounted in the Churchill Tanks at Dieppe). Source: Hogg, Ian V. *British and American Artillery of Word War Two*. Greenhill Books, London, 2002.



The Littlejohn adapter. An attachment at the end of the barrel reduced the diameter of the specialized shot and significantly increased the muzzle velocity. High explosive ammunition could not be fired without removing the adapter, which was not ideal in combat. The advantage in Italy was that the lighter 2-pounder gun was more mobile in the mud and the adapter gave it a reasonable capability against the German tanks. Source: Barnes, Leslie W.C.S. *Canada's Guns*. Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, 1979.



A 6-pounder anti-tank gun in action in Ortona. Source: National Library and Archives of Canada PA-141671.



A 6-pounder anti-tank gun in 90th Battery colours guards the Legion in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Source: Doug Knight.



The Swords and Ploughshares Museum's 6-pounder anti-tank gun. It has been restored and is used in re-enactments and displays. Source: Mike Calnan.



Two views of the 6-pounder armour-piercing round. Source: Mike Calnan.



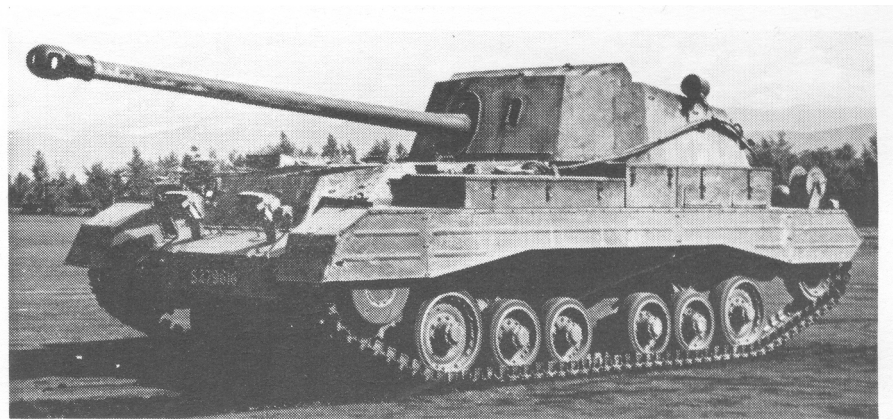
The 6-pounder was typically towed by the Lloyd (“Bren Gun”) Carrier or by similar vehicles such as the Windsor carrier. Each gun detachment had two carriers to tow the gun and carry the personnel, ammunition and stores. Source: Mike Calnan.



The Swords and Ploughshares Museum’s 17-pounder anti-tank gun. It is being restored and will be used in re-enactments and displays. Source: Mike Calnan.



The 17-pounder anti-tank gun. Source: Internet Web Site.



The 17-pounder anti-tank gun on Valentine tank chassis – “Archer”. It was unusual in that it fired over the rear engine deck (the upper photo is a view from the rear). The driver could not be in his seat during action because the gun recoiled into the driver’s compartment and would have decapitated him. Source: National Library and Archives of Canada.



The 17-pounder anti-tank gun on an American M-10 tank destroyer chassis. It looks like a tank, but was lightly armoured and had no armour on the top of the turret. The 1st Anti-tank Regiment did not use this equipment. Source: Internet Web Site.



King George VI inspects 7th Anti-tank Regiment, RCA. The officer accompanying the King is Lieutenant-Colonel J. A. Gillies, who, as a major, was a battery commander and second-in-command in the 1st Anti-tank Regiment from its formation until December 1942. The gun is a 6-pounder Mark II. Source: National Library and Archives of Canada.